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ABSTRACT

This handbook, intended for General Educational Development Test (GED) examiners, was designed to cover many of the issues and problems unique to the GED testing program in California. Six chapters are included: (1) testing center authorization and responsibilities; (2) testing center staff; (3) testing fees and materials; (4) test administration; (5) testing follow-up; and (6) GED Test preparation. Appendices include a testing center checklist, a survey of practices, adult education information bulletins, and a survey of GED preparation programs. (GDC)

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Handbook

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1984

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Preface

In 1974 the Legislature gave the California State Department of Education authority to establish General Educational Development (GED) testing centers and to issue High School Equivalency Certificates. Over the past ten years the number of testing centers has grown to 250, demonstrating the need for the program. California now serves approximately 42,000 persons per year and ranks fourth in the nation in terms of testing volume.

During the rapid growth of the GED testing program in the state, the Department has used the GED Examiner's Manual provided by the GED Testing Service of the American Council on Education. However, it has become obvious that the manual does not cover many of the situations peculiar to the California GED testing program. Therefore, the Handbook for General Educational Development (GED) Examiners was developed by the Department for use in conjunction with the GED Examiner's Manual to administer policies and practices more compatible with the State's program.

The most current information on GED testing in California has been consolidated in the handbook for easy reference. Specifically, the document covers such matters as testing center authorization and responsibilities; test center staff; testing fees and materials; testing administration; testing follow-up; and GED test preparation. Examiners should find the in-depth presentation in the handbook helpful in obtaining a comprehensive insight into GED testing.

The handbook was prepared under the direction of Kimberly A. Edwards, GED Coordinator, Adult Alternative and Continuation Education Services Division, California State Department of Education. More than 40 GED Examiners from throughout the state participated in the development and review of the handbook over a period of two years. Because of the contributions of so many committed people, we are confident that this handbook will be a useful resource for GED Examiners.

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Introduction

PERSPECTIVE ON GED TEST

Not a great deal has been recorded about the General Educational Development (GED) Test in California. It is a fact that in 1959 a test originally designed for war veterans was taken by approximately 6,500 persons at 75 agencies across the state. A year later the number increased by 2,000. By 1962 more nonveterans than veterans were taking the test in this state.

By 1965 the number of participating testing agencies increased to 116. But it was not until 1974 that California followed the trend started by several other states and enacted legislation (Education Code sections 51420--51427) that gave the State Department of Education authority to establish GED testing centers. The legislation and subsequent California Administrative Code, Title 5, regulations (sections 11530--11537) also authorized the Superintendent of Public Instruction to issue High School Equivalency Certificates to persons who passed the GED Test. State requirements for passing were set at an average of 45, with no one score lower than 35.

In response to the legislation and regulations, a "minioffice" was set up in the Bureau of School Approvals, State Department of Education, for issuing certificates. The understanding was that the program would be totally self-supporting, operating on the funds generated by the $8 fee charged for the certificate. Thus, the certificate program started literally as a one-person operation. While a clerk processed applications for certificates, consultants from the Bureau of School Approvals visited GED centers that opened around the state.

A few years later a GED state coordinator joined the program to meet the demand of 220 testing centers. In 1978 about 7,300 certificates were issued. Shortly thereafter the GED program was transferred to Adult Education Field Services in recognition of the role that adult and continuing education plays in adult education. In 1980 a second full-time clerk joined the staff. In that year 12,000 certificates were issued, representing a 48 percent increase in two years.

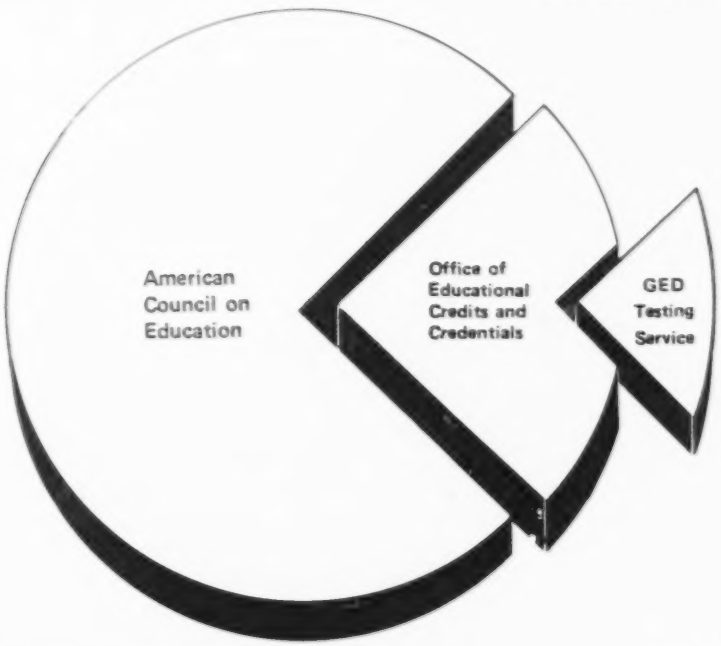
In 1981 47,000 persons were tested in California, an increase of about 4,300 over 1979, which averaged about 16 persons per month per center. Early in 1982 the State Board of Education amended the California Administrative Code, Title 5, regulations to ensure that centers provide all successful GED candidates with written information on the procedure for applying for the High School

Equivalency Certificate. In 1984 the Administrative Code, Title 5, was again amended to establish for California a clear policy on eligibility for taking the GED Test and to raise passing scores for issuance of the California High School Equivalency Certificate.

The number of GED testing centers has now stabilized at about 250, half of which are in adult schools. (In fact, one-third of all approved adult schools have testing centers.) Of the other 50 percent, about one-third are in postsecondary educational institutions (mostly community colleges). The rest of the centers are in county offices of education and other agencies, such as military bases, correctional institutions, and so on. The fact that California has more testing centers than any other state is significant. Most states average 50 centers.

California has for several years been the fourth largest state in terms of testing volume. Florida, Texas, and New York lead California by several thousand. So what does such a large volume of testing mean to California centers? It means that in California educators are working with a different set of issues, concerns, and problems than those found in most other states.

GED SERVICES



GED Testing Service
One Dupont Circle
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 833-4680

California State Department of Education
GED Office
721 Capitol Mall
Sacramento, CA 95814-4785
(916) 323-2572 or 2573

Chapter 1

Testing Center Authorization and Responsibilities

Chapter summary:

To become a center:

- Complete Form 75.
- Sign responsibilities agreement.
- Identify Chief Examiner.

Responsibilities

- Approve personnel.
- Know GED policies.
- Follow security requirements.
- Separate from GED preparation.
- Provide services to all eligible persons.
- Discuss options.
- Keep permanent records.
- Ensure that tests are not moved from site except through addendum.

Yearly procedures

Complete the following:

- Order form
- Contract
- Statistical report

If center closes down:

- Inform the State Department of Education.
- Return materials to Washington, D.C.
- Submit statistical report.
- Pay outstanding invoices.
- Inform Department of Education as to location of permanent records.

The State Department of Education may help with:

- Technical or policy assistance
- Programmatic problems
- Certificate questions
- Changes in personnel or testing site

The GED Testing Service may help with:

- Billing problems
- Ordering problems
- Testing materials problems
- Test development procedures
- GED research studies

A testing center is usually located in an adult school or other agency. The overall goal of the center is to help clients pursue available vocational, educational, and employment opportunities. Most of the centers in California have been in existence for several years and are affiliated with local school systems. Any new center must identify a need, such as a pool of potential clients who cannot otherwise receive GED services, perhaps because no other center is nearby. Only about four new centers are established each year, usually replacing centers that have closed down in isolated communities.

Authorization of GED Testing Centers

Agencies wishing to be authorized as GED testing centers must apply in writing to the GED Office, State Department of Education, Sacramento. If, in fact, a definite local need can be established, then the agency will be approved as a center after responsible personnel have done the following: (1) completed Form 75 (in the Appendix of the GED Examiner's Manual), which will be used to write the center's annual contract; (2) signed a form that lists the responsibilities of California testing centers; and (3) identified a Chief Examiner and any Alternate Examiners. These persons must sign a form designed to ensure their understanding of the role of examiner.

New testing centers should be aware of the fact that the GED testing service charges an establishment fee and a yearly fee of approximately $30. This fee is assessed every year when the testing center first orders materials or at the beginning of the contract cycle.

Responsibilities of GED Testing Centers

The GED Testing Service requires that testing be consistent with the primary educational mission of an agency. Foremost among responsibilities is upholding the integrity of the GED Test by following all security requirements. For example, the GED Testing Service requires that a limited-access, secure storage area be maintained for restricted testing materials. (See Appendix A for additional information.)

Ongoing Responsibilities

In addition to security requirements there are other policies (see Figure 1) that centers must follow:

- Maintain on staff an approved Chief Examiner (and Alternate Examiners, if appropriate) to administer and score all tests. These are the only persons who may have access to the GED, and they are asked to sign a formal agreement with the State Department of Education to verify that they will abide by all specified responsibilities. Any changes in personnel are to be reported to the State Department of Education.

- Remain abreast of current and changing GED policies through the State Department of Education information bulletins and other means. Chief Examiners are responsible for training Alternate Examiners and sharing with them information bulletins and other GED communiques so that they can remain up-to-date on GED issues and practices.

January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Annual statistical reports due.				GEDTS sends new contracts.	Old contract year ends. New contracts due. Pay outstanding invoices. Order new materials. Is a Chief/ Alternate Examiner on hand to receive shipment of new materials?	If you're closed for the summer, is everything secured? New contract year begins. Receive new materials. Return old materials.					GEDTS sends annual statistical reports. State GED compliance checks; visits by GED coordinator or designee.

Figure 1. Test Center Activity Schedule

- Cooperate with all security and other requirements established by GED/ American Council on Education and the State Department of Education, including (a) following procedures for verifying applicant identity, high school enrollment status, previous testing experiences, and age; (b) maintaining testing materials in a locked file cabinet at all times; and (c) following all other requirements set forth in publications from the GED Testing Service and the State Department of Education.

- Ensure that the testing program (including personnel) is kept entirely separate from GED instructional activities or classes.

- Provide testing services to all segments of the community, including persons who wish to take the GED in Spanish and those eligible to take it in braille, large print, or audiocassette tape editions.

- Advise clients on options available to them, including the High School Equivalency Certificate for those who pass and study options for those who do not.

- Maintain permanent records of scores belonging to all persons taking the GED. When a testing center closes, it must notify the State Department of Education of the location of the permanent records.

Periodically, as well as when a new center is established, the Chief Examiner is asked to sign a list of the above responsibilities. The Chief Examiner's signature indicates that he or she, in addition to the Alternate(s), has reviewed the form, is familiar with the responsibilities, and understands the importance of abiding by them.

Yearly Responsibilities

Centers are responsible for completing three documents on a yearly basis and returning appropriate copies to the GED Testing Service or the State Department of Education. These documents are the annual contract, the order form, and the statistical report:

- Annual Contract

The contract, covering the period from July 1 to June 30, is the basis of the relationship between the testing center and the GED Testing Service. It is sent, along with a blank order form, in multiple copies every spring from the GED Testing Service to the Department of Education, where it is reviewed and signed by the GED State Administrator. From there it is forwarded, along with the order form, to the testing center. When the Chief Examiners receive the new contract, they should review it for accuracy of information, such as the name of the contracting agency (usually the school or community college district), the testing center's name and exact shipping address, the names of the approved Chief Examiner, and any special authorization to transport tests to another location. Any recently requested changes probably will not be reflected on the contract. If something is not correct, contact the Department of Education at (916) 323-2573. Do not make any changes in the contract. All new changes at this time should be submitted in writing to the State Department of Education for approval. The Chief Examiner must then

obtain the signature of the Chief Administrative Officer, usually the district superintendent or community college chancellor. The pink copy is due in Washington before June 30.

After all the information on the contract has been verified as being correct, and the Chief Administrative Officer has signed the document, copies should be distributed as follows:

Pink copy - GED Testing Service (send also with order form and payment for any outstanding invoices)

Green copy - State Department of Education

White copy - Chief Administrative Officer

Canary copy - File copy to be kept at the center

It is imperative that the appropriate copies be returned as soon as possible. (If the wrong copies are distributed, new materials may be delayed.) Most centers return their contracts and order form well in advance of the June 30 deadline so that the new orders can be filled and received by the beginning of the new contract year. Orders will not be filled at all unless they are accompanied by the completed contract and all past bills have been paid. Any questions in regard to order forms or contracts should be directed to the Contracts Manager at the GED Testing Service.

- Order Form

The order form will be sent to the center in the spring along with a new contract. (See Chapter 3 for information on ordering materials.) Before the order form is returned to the GED Testing Service, it should be reviewed for accuracy; the form must have the appropriate signature, and the center should not have any outstanding debts. The order form should be forwarded to the GED Testing Service along with the pink copy of the contract. It should not be sent to the State Department of Education.

- Statistical Report

The Annual Statistical Report is a form used by the GED Testing Service to tabulate the number of persons tested during the previous year. This form is sent directly to centers from the GED Testing Service during or just prior to the Christmas holiday season. Centers are asked to record the number of persons tested (by specified category) during the previous calendar year.

Some centers have found it helpful to keep a running count of examinees throughout the year. The count minimizes the task of completing the report at the end of the year.

After completing the report, the center should distribute copies in accordance with the instructions printed on the form.

January 31 is the deadline for receipt of the Annual Statistical Report by the GED Testing Service. Centers that have not returned the Annual Statistical Report are generally contacted until it is received.

Transporting Tests/Addendums to Contracts

Occasionally a testing center identifies a need to take the tests to another site, such as a rehabilitation or correctional agency. When such a situation arises, the Department of Education should be advised of the need in writing. An arrangement can be made for the Chief or Alternate Examiner to hand-carry GED materials on a frequent or periodic basis to another agency, give the tests, and return the answer sheets to the center for scoring. A few centers have prespecified agreements with the GED Testing Service and the Department of Education to house tests and score sheets at other sites, but these situations are very infrequent. When any arrangement to move tests is authorized (only after approval by GED Testing Service and the Department of Education), an addendum to the center's annual contract is drawn up. If the center has an addendum and the arrangement changes or ceases, the Department should be notified as soon as possible.

If the center does not have an addendum, then the center may not under any circumstances move the tests or score keys to another site, even within the same district.

Changing Locations and Closing Down

If the mailing address or physical location of the center changes, the Chief Examiner must inform the Department of Education in writing. The Department, in turn, will inform the GED Testing Service. If the center plans to move to another site, the Department should be notified in advance so that this information can be sent to the GED Testing Service.

If a center decides to stop testing and to close down, it must take the following steps:

1. Inform the Department of Education, which will authorize the disestablishment of the center.

2. Return immediately to the GED Testing Service all restricted testing materials. Under separate cover, inform the Testing Service that the center is in the process of being disestablished as a center.

3. Submit to the Testing Service (under separate cover) a statistical report on the number of tests given during the portion of the year that the center was in operation.

4. Make sure that the center has paid any outstanding bills.

5. Inform the State Department of Education of the location of permanent records of test results of persons tested at the center while in operation. (These records must be retained within the school system or institution where the center was located.)

Program Administration

The GED Testing Service and the State Department of Education share the responsibility for approving testing centers and examiners and ensuring that centers follow the policies related to the use of the GED.

The GED Testing Service of the American Council on Education is a private agency, not affiliated with the federal government, which oversees the testing program in accordance with policies set by the Commission on Educational Credits and Credentials. Besides establishing security requirements for the GED, it sets the overall tone for the administration of the tests. The continuing emphasis of the agency's approach is upholding the integrity of the GED program.

Every few years the GED Testing Service oversees the development of new test forms and subsequent norming studies. In addition, the agency carries out research, such as the 1980 National Candidate Study, tabulates a yearly report on numbers of persons tested, and addresses issues for the states concerning GED, high school completion, and practice tests through a series called "Research Briefs." (The GED Testing Service solicits ideas for research projects and studies.) Most contacts with centers, however, relate to business arrangements for materials, payment, and research or control forms for GED tests. In fact, this summarizes the relationship of the GED Testing Service to most centers in California. Any problem that a center may have regarding materials or payment should be directed to the GED Testing Service, One Dupont Circle, Washington, DC 20036; telephone (202) 833-4680.

All inquiries of a technical or program assistance nature should be directed to the GED Unit, Adult Education Field Services, Department of Education, 721 Capitol Mall, Sacramento, CA 95814; telephone (916) 323-2573 or -72. Since the Department is ultimately responsible for making sure that centers follow GED Testing Service policies, as well as any additional policies established by the Department, it tries to provide assistance in a variety of ways.

The principal means of providing technical assistance is the GED information bulletin, which is distributed to all Chief Examiners who are asked to share it on a timely basis with Alternate Examiners. Assistance is also provided through telephone contacts, on-site visitations, periodic field advisories, regional workshops, and developmental projects.

Another form of technical assistance is the GED compliance check. Frequently used as a basis for on-site visitations, the real value of this list is in its consolidation of the "musts" for GED testing. It is a tool that centers should find helpful in making sure that they are operating in accordance with GED policies. The compliance check is updated every year. The purpose of the check is only to simplify and streamline GED requirements.

Chapter 2

Testing Center Staff

Chapter summary:

Chief or Alternate Examiner

- Keeps up-to-date on GED policies
- Trains other GED personnel
- Takes care of annual contract
- Completes statistical report
- Orders materials
- Initiates and ensures payment
- Schedules testing sessions
- Determines eligibility
- Conducts testing sessions
- Scores tests
- Inventories materials
- Provides follow-up for those in need
- Cooperates with security measures
- Keeps testing separate from preparation program
- Initiates changes in Alternate Examiners
- Reports test losses

Chief Administrative Officer

- Understands need for GED services
- Knows GED goals
- Signs annual contract
- Appoints Chief Examiner
- Familiarizes self with any test loss incidences

Proctor

- Schedules appointments
- Registers clients
- May not test or score
- Distributes/collects scratch paper
- Maintains testing log
- Processes applications for certificates
- Types test results

Chief Administrative Officer

A center requires a Chief Administrative Officer, usually the superintendent of a school district or the chancellor of a community college district. If the center is not affiliated with a school system, the Chief Administrative Officer is usually the top administrator, although this determination is made on a case-by-case basis.

The Chief Administrative Officer is never actually involved in the testing program, but rather is the person who has overall responsibility. The duties of the Chief Administrative Officer include the following:

1. Becoming familiar with the need for GED services in the community and understanding the goals of the GED testing program

2. Signing the annual contract as the agency representative who enters into the contract with the GED Testing Service

3. Appointing a Chief Examiner and replacing the Chief Examiner, when appropriate

4. Familiarizing himself or herself with any test loss incident and taking action when appropriate

Chief Examiner

The Chief Examiner is the on-the-scene person responsible for test administration. In some centers the Chief Examiner actually gives and scores the test, while in larger centers he or she may leave these duties to Alternate Examiners.

Qualifications for the Chief Examiner include a background indicative of the person's ability to be responsible for GED testing. The GED Testing Service recommends a Bachelor in Arts degree, but from time to time this requirement is waived to allow centers more flexibility. The actual on-the-job title is not important.

When a Chief Examiner leaves or is replaced, the Department of Education must be notified in writing. This may be done by an Examiner, although it is the responsibility of the Chief Administrative Officer.

When a new Chief Examiner is identified and the Department of Education is notified, a "Responsibilities Agreement" is sent for his or her signature. (See Figure 2.) After this form has been returned, the Department will notify the GED Testing Service. At that point, the new Examiner is authorized to join the program.

If the Chief Examiner takes a leave of absence, the Department of Education should be informed so that it will know how the program will operate in his or her absence. If the leave is for a matter of a few months, it is unlikely that a formal appointment will be made for the interim replacement, although this decision is made on a case-by-case basis.

Dear _____

You have been nominated to serve as Chief or Alternate Examiner at your GED Testing Center. Before we recommend your name to the GED Testing Service, we ask that you please read, sign, and return this sheet to us, indicating your understanding of the requirements you must meet.

Certification of Meeting Requirements and Responsibilities for Chief/Alternate Examiner

1. Chief/Alternate Examiners must meet the eligibility requirements, that is, having a degree or responsible experience in testing, measurement, or a field related to education, and having no involvement whatsoever in GED preparation classes.

2. Authorized Chief/Alternate Examiners must conduct all testing sessions, remain present during every test, and score all answer sheets. No other person may be involved without approval by the State Department of Education and the GED Testing Service.

3. Authorized Chief/Alternate Examiners must be the only persons to whom GED tests and scoring materials are accessible.

4. Chief/Alternate Examiners are responsible for following security measures and other GED procedures as set forth in the GED Manual and policies and regulations established by the State Department of Education.

I certify that I will to the best of my ability adhere to the above, and understand that if I do not, I may no longer be involved in GED testing.

_____ _____
Chief/Alternate Examiner Date

_____ _____
School/District/Agency County

If above is to add an Alternate Examiner, the current Chief Examiner must review and sign the following statement:

I hereby acknowledge that I have fully in-serviced the above person--and will continue to do so on an ongoing basis--on the policies, rules, and regulations set forth by GED of the American Council on Education and the State Department of Education.

_____ _____
Chief Examiner Date

_____
Official GED Testing Center

Please return to: GED Unit, California State Department of Education, 721 Capitol Mall, Sacramento, CA 95814.

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE. FOR STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND GED TESTING SERVICE USE ONLY.

. . . . . .

Director
GED Testing Service
One Dupont Circle
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Director:

The California State Department of Education recommends that _____ be authorized to serve as _____ Examiner (replacing _____)
Name/Title Chief/Alternate

of the testing center located at _____.

He or she has agreed to the required responsibilities and understands that if they are not adhered to, he or she may no longer be involved in GED testing.

_____
State GED Coordinator

Figure 2. Sample Responsibilities Form

For a list of responsibilities of the Chief Examiner, see the following section on Alternate Examiners.

Alternate Examiner

The Alternate Examiner may carry out any of the Chief Examiner's responsibilities. There are no hard-and-fast qualifications for becoming an Alternate Examiner. Rather, the Department of Education is more concerned that an Alternate Examiner demonstrates a willingness to accept the responsibility assigned to the role by the GED Testing Service and that he or she becomes familiar with policies.

Specifically, the Chief Examiner or Alternate Examiner is responsible for carrying out the following tasks:

1. Keeping up-to-date on GED activities through the State Department of Education information bulletins and other means.

2. Training Examiners and sharing the State Department of Education information bulletins and other communiques with these persons so that they can remain up-to-date on GED issues and practices.

3. Appointing and giving in-service training to proctors on their role and responsibilities.

4. Ensuring that the annual contract is signed and appropriate copies returned on a timely basis.

5. Completing the annual statistical report on a timely basis.

6. Ordering new materials.

7. Initiating payment for testing materials.

8. Setting a test schedule that meets local community needs.

9. Verifying the identity and eligibility of candidates.

10. Verifying persons eligible to be tested with the braille, audiocassette tapes, or large print versions.

11. Conducting all testing sessions, remaining present during every test, and scoring all answer sheets and reporting scores. Ensuring that no other persons except for approved Alternates have access to the tests.

12. Inventorying and checking materials at the beginning and end of each testing session and weekly when tests are not being used.

13. Ensuring that examinees receive appropriate follow-up counseling, including a discussion of options such as the High School Equivalency Certificate.

14. Cooperating with all security measures and other GED policies established by the GED Testing Service and the State Department of Education (including the secure maintenance of testing materials when not in use.)

15. Ensuring that the testing program (including personnel) is kept entirely separate from GED preparation classes.

16. Informing the Department of Education (in writing) of any changes in Chief or Alternate Examiners and signing the "Responsibilities Agreement Form."

17. Informing the Department of Education (in writing) of any change in physical location, mailing address, and so on.

18. Informing the State Department of Education of unusual events that take place during testing sessions and promptly reporting all irregularities.

How many Alternates may a center have? It varies, according to the local situation. The GED Testing Service prefers that a center not have more than two Alternates. However, a center's testing schedule and volume of testing occasionally require more Alternates. Thus, more Alternates are often approved if the center can show the need. Approval depends on how many people are tested at a time, how often tests are conducted, and so on.

When an Alternate leaves or a new one joins the program, the Department of Education should be advised in writing. This point cannot be stressed enough! The Department is held responsible by the GED Testing Service for knowing who has access to tests at the center and, therefore, must be kept up-to-date. It is no easy task to stay on top of a situation involving almost one thousand persons up and down the state! The job can be made easier by advising the Department clearly and completely, as was done in the following letter sent by a testing center:

Dear GED Coordinator:

Jan Greer, one of our Alternates, recently left the program. We plan to replace her next month with Paul Wells.

Mr. Wells came to us from another adult school in the district, where he worked as a proctor and registered persons for the GED for five years. I feel that he is ready to accept more responsibility and plan to train him on GED.

In addition to Mr. Wells, our other Alternates will continue to be Mavis Jones and Sally Margulis.

Sincerely,

Chief Examiner
(Name of Testing Center)

The above memorandum is only an example, but all pertinent information should be included in the correspondence so you do not have to be contacted for further clarification, such as who the remaining Alternates are. In the above case, the Department was able to process the letter and send the "Responsibilities Agreement" to Paul Wells on the same day.

Alternates for the most part will no longer appear on the annual contract from the GED Testing Service. However, the Department of Education is still responsible for approving all Examiners.

Proctor

A proctor is a helper in the testing room who, in addition to the Examiner, watches examinees and carries out such tasks such as distributing and collecting scratch paper. A proctor must be present if more than 20 persons are tested at a time. Regardless of how many persons take the test, a proctor may not administer and score tests. A proctor may not be in the testing room without the Examiner. A proctor may not score the tests or have access to the file cabinet where the tests are stored. If the proctor is doing these things, then the center should either change the proctor's role or take steps to add the proctor as an Alternate.

A proctor's duties may include distributing and collecting test materials, processing applications for the state certificates, and maintaining the test log. A proctor may also schedule appointments or register clients. Some centers use proctors to type test results.

A proctor must have a high school diploma or the equivalent. Centers do not have to submit the names of their proctors for approval by the Department of Education.

Registrar

Some centers have registrars who help to schedule appointments, pull enrollment cards, take money for the tests, and write receipts. A testing center may have so many clients that several registrars work side by side. However, the center should make sure that the registrar (or anyone other than the Examiner) is not making subjective decisions about eligibility for GED. In most cases the system works fine. But determinations can be complicated when they involve a person's enrollment status in school, proof of a diploma, and so forth. At one center the system appeared to be running smoothly until the Examiner realized the registrars at the counter were not asking the appropriate eligibility questions or checking identification. A more complete application was quickly devised which alleviated most of the concern. However, situations still arose, convincing the Examiner that identification and eligibility determinations should always be handled by himself or herself.

Chapter 3

Testing Fees and Materials

Chapter summary:

Setting Fees

- Should be reasonable and reflect locally prevailing charges
- Varies from center to center based on overhead
- Takes into account costs for special editions

Ordering Materials

- Estimate number based on last year's volume.
- Return form along with pink copy of contract to GED Testing Service.
- Allow 4 to 8 weeks for delivery.
- Use old materials until new ones arrive.
- See Examiner's Manual for checklist on ordering.

Receiving Materials

- Check quality as well as quantity.
- Keep packing slip for next year.
- Forward two copies of invoice to business office. Check back to ensure payment.
- Make checks payable to GED Testing Service.

Caring for Materials

- Tests and scoring keys to be kept in locked files
- Only examiners to have access
- Inventoried regularly
- Tests checked for marks and missing pages before examinees leave.
- Materials not to be moved without prior approval by State Department of Education

Returning Old Materials

- Return by July 30.
- Arrange tests in numerical order.
- Include inventory sheet.
- Do not include any correspondence.
- Send scoring stencils under separate cover.
- Insure materials--receipt requested.
- See Examiner's Manual for a checklist.

Reporting Lost Materials

- Inform State Department of Education and GED Testing Service immediately.
- Stop all testing.
- Conduct investigation.
- Submit report to Department of Education.

Centers in California set their own fees for taking and retaking the battery and the individual tests. They make the determination according to the cost of overhead.

Setting a Fee Schedule

Fees charged throughout the state range from free to $25 for the complete battery because of the variation in overhead among centers. The fee should be set on the basis of what the center decides is a fair price to clients and what will pay for operating expenses. The Testing Service stipulates that the fee should be "reasonable and reflect locally prevailing charges."

One additional consideration that centers should make in setting their fee structure is the cost for testing persons with the Spanish, braille, large print, or audiocassette tapes. Centers may choose not to stock these tests. However, should a client come to the center needing one of the special editions, the center will have to rent them. Therefore, the fee structure should be developed to take this into account and pass the cost along in an equitable way to each client.

From time to time centers receive requests from the Employment Development Department (EDD) on behalf of persons who fall into a category described in Unemployment Insurance Code Section 10501. These persons seek a waiver of fee, both for taking the test and applying for the certificate, on the basis that a public assistance recipient completing a job training program is exempt from fees of a test or "certification required by state law if the employment opportunity is for a job for which the recipient was trained." Up until now, however, no request has been applicable; in no case were the GED scores or the certificate shown to be required by state law as a prerequisite for a job for which the persons were trained. If the center receives similar requests from the Employment Development Department for a waiver of fees, the inquirer may be referred to the State Department of Education.

Ordering Materials

The form sent with the annual contract should be used to order materials. An order form may also be obtained from the GED Testing Service, or a xerox copy can be made from the form in the appendix of the GED Examiner's Manual.

The center should be sure to order enough materials for the whole year. The GED Testing Service will charge the full year's price if the center has to order more materials in the middle of the year. Centers with Spanish-speaking persons in their service area should order two batteries in that language. The center should also consider stocking the braille, audiocassette, and large-print versions, particularly since the stocking charge is the same as for the "one-shot" charge.

Answer sheets do not have to be ordered if the center uses scantron. This fact should be indicated on the order form. Otherwise the GED Testing Service may return the order form or automatically ship some answer sheets.

Allow four to eight weeks for delivery. Use the old materials until the new materials arrive. If the supply runs out during the year and new materials must be ordered quickly, call the Testing Service and explain that the materials are needed. However, try to plan ahead to avoid this situation. Order forms should be sent directly to the GED Testing Service along with the pink copy of the annual contract. (If the center orders during the year, then, of course, there will not be a pink copy to return.) Do not send order forms to the State Department of Education! For specific information and a checklist for ordering materials, see the GED Examiner's Manual.

The GED Testing Service has asked that centers do not, under any circumstance, duplicate answer sheets. The GED Testing Service holds the copyright. Order more answer sheets before exhausting those on hand.

Receiving New Materials

The packing slip that is received with new materials should be used to inventory materials upon receipt. GED will replace any defective or missing materials if alerted immediately after the center receives the shipment. A copy of the packing slip should be filed for use the following year when materials are returned to GED.

Two copies of the invoice should be forwarded to the center's business office for payment. Checks should be made out to the GED Testing Service, not the American Council of Education (ACE). Otherwise, payment will first go to ACE, where it will be delayed. Occasionally an Examiner assumes that payment has been made, and then is notified at a later date that the center is being closed because of an unpaid invoice. Such an incident can be avoided by checking back periodically with the business office to make sure that all invoices have been paid.

Care of Restricted Materials

The GED Testing Service has established the following requirements for care and storage of GED tests, answer sheets, and score report forms:

- Materials should be stored by themselves in locked files.
- Files must be kept locked at all times when not in use.
- Only approved Chief and Alternate Examiners should have access to the key.
- Tests and score keys should be inventoried before and after each testing session and weekly when tests are not being used. (See Figure 3 for sample GED inventory sheet.)
- Tests should be checked for marks and missing pages at the conclusion of every testing session before examinees are permitted to leave.
- Scoring stencils should not be removed from secure storage until testing is over.

Month:
Year:

GED INVENTORY AM/PM CHECK LIST

	Date: AM	PM	Date: AM	PM	Date: AM	PM	Date: AM	PM	Date: AM	PM	Date: AM	PM	Date: AM	PM	Date: AM	PM	Date: AM	PM	Date: AM	PM	Date: AM	PM	Date: AM	PM	Date: AM	PM	Date: AM	PM	Date: AM	PM
FORM																														
Test 1																														
Test 2																														
Test 3																														
Test 4																														
Test 5																														
One set Ans. Key																														
FORM																														
Test 1																														
Test 2																														
Test 3																														
Test 4																														
Test 5																														
One set Ans. Key																														
FORM																														
Test 1																														
Test 2																														
Test 3																														
Test 4																														
Test 5																														
One set Ans. Key																														
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One set Ans. Key																														
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Test 3																														
Test 4																														
Test 5																														
One set Ans. Key																														

9-25-79:tis

(From San Mateo County Career Preparation Center)

Figure 3. Sample GED Inventory Sheet

- Tests or scoring stencils may not under any circumstances be destoyed at the center.

- Answer sheets should be destroyed within a reasonable time period.

- Materials must not be moved to any other site without permission of the State Department of Education.

In the last few years, every test loss incident in California, almost without exception, has been the result of testing centers not following the above requirements.

Returning Old Materials

Material must be returned within 30 days of the date of expiration of the annual contract; that is, July 30. The materials should be packed in the same box in which they were received from the GED Testing Service. (The flap of the box bears a preprinted address for the center's convenience.)

Arrange all materials in numerical sequence. The GED Testing Service receives approximately 50 boxes a day and, for obvious reasons, requests that the materials be in order. Include the packing slip received with the material the previous year. If the old packing slip is not available, include the center's inventory sheet.

Do not enclose anything else in the box, such as money orders, signed contracts, order forms, or letters. The only items to be enclosed are an inventory sheet and the restricted materials. Scoring stencils must be sent under separate cover with return receipt requested. The Testing Service employs a crew to unpack materials and send them to the shredder. If any other items are enclosed in the box, they may be destroyed. Be sure to send other items separately.

When materials are returned to the GED Testing Service, they must be sent by United Parcel Service (UPS) or by insured parcel post with return receipt requested. The record shows that California has been the biggest offender of this policy. For more information and a checklist for materials, refer to the GED Examiner's Manual.

Loss of Restricted Materials

If the requirements listed earlier in this chapter under "Care of Tests" are followed, the center should not lose a test. However, if a test is lost, the center must comply with established procedures to protect the integrity of the testing system. The GED Examiner's Manual lists the following steps that must be taken when a test is lost:

1. The center must inform the State Department of Education, the GED Testing Service, and the Chief Administrative Officer immediately. The center should not wait until it returns the old materials to report the test loss. (An increase in reports of test losses at the end of the contract year

suggests that this is done at some centers.) All parties should be notified in writing of the serial number of the item lost.

2. The center must stop all testing and refer clients elsewhere (usually for a period of two to three months.)

3. The Chief Examiner must conduct an investigation to determine the whereabouts of the test, if possible; the circumstances under which it was lost or taken; and identify where the process broke down.

4. A report summarizing the findings must be submitted to the State Department of Education. The report must also contain information on how the center will change testing procedures to avoid a similar occurrence in the future.

5. The State Department of Education will review the center's report and make recommendations to the GED Testing Service as to whether the center should be authorized to resume testing.

6. The GED Testing Service will review the situation and respond to the State Department of Education with a copy to the center. If the GED Testing Service authorizes the center to resume testing, it may do so at that time.

7. The center will be notified if the State Department of Education or the Testing Service has concerns or recommends that operations be suspended.

8. If the investigation determines that a test form was compromised, the remaining stock of that form must be returned to the GED Testing Service. The center will be charged a full, annual rental fee.

The following is excerpted from a 1981 letter from Hank Spille, Director of GED Testing Service, on the subject of test losses:

> It appears that some of the losses actually occurred earlier in the year but were just discovered because the procedure for regularly taking inventory was not followed. When an inventory was taken at the end of the school year or fiscal year, tests were found to be missing. In some instances, Chief Examiners were careless in administering the tests; they did not follow the required test administration procedures. For example, tests and scoring stencils were left unattended on the top of the Examiner's desk and were stolen; testing materials should never be left unattended, and scoring stencils should never be present at testing sessions. In one case, examinees were given two tests at one time, which is a procedural violation. Another procedural error was made when the Examiner failed to log the number of each test booklet given to the examinees. As a result, he or she could not identify the examinee who had been given the two tests. A final example of a test being stolen occurred when a "walk-in" walked out with a test booklet. The Chief Examiner, who was performing other tasks, was not being vigilant in his or her test administration duties, and left the room. When the Examiner returned, the examinee and test were gone. Most of these cases occurred in centers where testing is conducted on an individual rather than group basis.

The emphasis in the preceding paragraph was on secure testing materials, but as noted at the State GED Administrators' Conference, it is equally important to protect and maintain in secure storage the score report forms. Fraudulent use of these forms also jeopardizes the integrity of the credential.

All security breaches threaten the validity of test scores and the integrity of the credential and the program. They could also be very costly if the breach was serious enough to require the withdrawal of a test form.

Chapter 4

Testing Administration

Chapter summary:

Eligibility

- Second chance notion
- Within 60 days of 18th birthday or graduation, had client stayed in school and followed the usual course of study. Seventeen year olds not within that 60-day period are eligible if they have been out of school 60 days and have a letter from one of three sources.

Scheduling

- What type of scheduling is warranted by local need and the availability of testing room and personnel?
- How many tests can you give in one day?

Registration

- Develop a procedure for verifying client information.
- Develop forms for client to complete that provide authorization for release of scores, and information on tutorial services and applying for a High School Equivalency Certificate.

Practice Tests

- Provide information as to client strengths and weaknesses.
- Save center's time and clients' time.
- Provide for success; eliminates fear of taking test.

Testing

- Remove from the file only those booklets needed. Record in file log.
- Complete log in testing room: examinee's name, form and serial number, time, and so on.
- Dictionaries, calculators, etc., are prohibited from testing area.
- Distribute scratch paper for math test in particular.
- Explain about the testing procedures and put examinees at ease.
- When client is finished, log in test booklet, then review for marks and missing pages before allowing client to leave.

Scoring

- Not permitted in testing room
- No rounding off
- A "pass" occurs when a client earns an average of 45 with no one score lower than 40.

Retesting

- Local testing center policy
- Not for people who passed the first time
- Different form of test must be used.

The purpose of the GED Test is to provide opportunities to persons who, for hardship or other reasons, left the school system without completing a twelfth grade education and now seek a second chance.

Requirements for Admittance (Eligibility)

California Administrative Code, Title 5, Regulations specify eligibility for taking the GED Test at no sooner than 60 days prior to when the candidate becomes eligible for a High School Equivalency Certificate. Candidates are eligible for a certificate when they turn eighteen or when their class would have graduated had they stayed in school and followed the usual course of study (Education Code, Section 51420[c]). The 60-day limitation does not apply to any person who is seventeen years of age or older, who has been out of school for at least 60 days, and who submits a letter of request for the test from the military, a postsecondary educational institution, or a prospective employer. In other words, a seventeen-year-old who has been out of school for 60 days and who submits a letter of request from one of the three above-named sources is eligible to take the GED Test.

CETA/Job Corps programs will be considered "prospective employers"; however, persons looking for a job or similarly considered to be in the "job mode" are not eligible.

The question has been raised as to whether emancipated minors may take the GED Test. The Emancipation of Minors Act allows any minor who is sixteen years old and under eighteen to be emancipated from parental or guardian control by meeting certain standards specified in the Act (Civil Code, Section 62). The Act also states that an "emancipated minor shall be considered as being over the age of majority (eighteen) for . . ." nine specific purposes, none of which pertains to taking the GED or the Certificate of High School Equivalency. Therefore, emancipated minors are not eligible to take the GED any earlier than anyone else.

Persons possessing a diploma may not take the GED for purposes of gaining admittance into a labor union examination. The GED Testing Service has stated the following:

> Some employers and postsecondary education institutions have required high school graduates to take the GED tests in an attempt to verify their level of educational development. This practice violates the intention of the Commission because high school graduates do not need a second chance to earn a high school credential. This practice is now explicitly forbidden, except when done as part of a research study conducted or authorized by the GED Testing Service. The Commission believes that (1) GED tests should not be used to appraise high school diplomas; (2) it should not condone such a practice by permitting the tests to be administered to high school graduates. . . . Employers and postsecondary education institutions have other available means of verifying relevant skills and developed abilities. Employers can administer achievement tests for the subject or skill areas in which they need to assess potential employees. . . .

Likewise, persons who have previously passed the GED are not eligible to take it again for the purpose of scoring higher to gain entrance into a college or other program.

Persons who have recently immigrated to this country may be tested. At one time, centers were asked to analyze the educational credentials of these persons to determine if they had the equivalent of a U.S. high school diploma. However, this proved to be very impractical and time-consuming for centers testing on a large scale. As a result, California's current policy is that these persons may be tested if they do not possess a diploma from this country.

From time to time a question arises concerning persons who become mentally incapacitated subsequent to high school graduation. Often these persons, after being rehabilitated, seek employment and are in need of the GED. Traditionally, the GED Testing Service did not provide for testing these persons for the same reason that other persons with a diploma may not be tested. Recently, the GED Testing Service was asked to reconsider this issue. Again, the decision was that such persons are not eligible for the GED.

Residency is <u>not</u> a state requirement for eligibility for testing. Up until recently it had been a GED Testing Service requirement, but has since been eliminated. As a result, aliens are eligible for testing as long as they meet other requirements. Some centers provide free testing for local residents; therefore, these centers may wish to establish their own residency requirements.

Scheduling

Centers set up their own testing schedules. A center's schedule is usually based on the following:

- Local testing needs
- Availability of examiners
- Need of applicants; e.g., Saturday or night testing
- Availability of testing room

How often a center tests is not as important as the fact that the GED be available to meet community needs. The following is a survey of GED needs taken by one center in California:

GED Survey Sample

We are trying to make the GED Testing more efficient and would appreciate your opinion. Please indicate your preference to the testing times.

____ One complete day, from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
(Same way you are taking GED today!)

____ Two consecutive mornings, from 7:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon.
(Indicate day of week below.)

____ Monday
____ Tuesday
____ Wednesday
____ Thursday
____ Friday

____ Other (Write your suggestions below.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

Obviously, centers which test a dozen persons a year do not need to be on a frequent schedule. However, testing schedules should be reasonable enough so that candidates are not required to wait an undue length of time before being tested.

How many tests should a client be scheduled to take in one day? Feasibly, a person could take all five tests, although the GED Testing Service recommends that the tests be taken over a two-day period. Most centers in California give the total battery over two or three days. One of the benefits of the GED pretests is that the Examiner learns which subjects the candidate has the greatest strength in and can then administer the "real" tests in order of strength, better ensuring success.

Some clients are encouraged by centers to complete a preparation program that is divided into blocks; e.g., math for three weeks, science for the next three weeks, and so on. The student is encouraged to take the corresponding test after completing each block. This use of the GED, given on five different occasions, almost as an "end-of-each-block" examination, is discouraged by the GED Testing Service. The agency feels that the GED Test should be considered as one hurdle rather than as five separate obstacles.

Testing Appointments

Some centers in California make testing appointments (Figure 4) over the telephone (after an initial screening) and, on the day of the test, ask the client to complete an application to verify eligibility, pay for the test, and provide proper photo identification. Other centers, particularly those limited in the number of persons they can test, require applicants to register, pay, and show identification in advance. Still other centers encourage persons to take a pretest, then pay, before attempting the actual test. (On the day of the test, the applicant again shows identification.) This procedure helps to avoid the problem of cancellations that have meanwhile precluded other applicants from testing due to the lack of space. Still other centers have a regularly scheduled time for testing but do not take appointments in advance. Applicants are asked simply to show up.

Registration

What information should be asked of a client who registers to take the GED Test? Most centers know what they want to ask and how they want to ask it (Figure 5). Generally, though, they ask for at least all of the following information:

- Name
- Permanent address
- Telephone number
- Social security number
- Service number (if different from social security number)
- Date of birth
- Last grade completed, last school attended, and date dropped out
- Any previous attempts to pass the GED--where, when, and which tests they took
- Reason for taking the GED Test
- Referral agency, (local tutoring program, job corps, and so on)
- If candidate is enrolled in an adult or other tutorial program
- If candidate desires that test results be sent to an employer or agency

Through the interview or registration form, examiners try to verify the following things about the candidate:

- Never graduated from a high school in the U.S.
- Never received an equivalency certificate from any state
- Never passed the GED Test

C - Certificate S - SC
A - Armed Forces U - UN

7:45 a.m.	7:45 a.m.	9:10 a.m.	10:50 a.m.	12:00 p.m.

Figure 4. Sample GED Appointment Schedule

F E E P A I D

_____ Date

Date _____

Name (PLEASE PRINT) Mr. Mrs. Miss _____ Last First Middle name

Home address _____ Number Street Apt. # City State ZIP Code

Telephone number _____ Age _____ Date of birth _____ Month Day Year

Social Security no. _____ Circle highest grade completed 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Have you been to this center before? Yes _____ No _____

Have you taken the GED Test before? Yes ___ No ___ Where? _____

Please send a report of my test results to the school or agency below (PLEASE PRINT)

_____ ATTN: _____

Address _____ Number Street Apt. # City State ZIP Code

If the results of this test are satisfactory, do you intend to enroll for any day or evening classes here or at any other school? _____

What agency or individual requested you take this test? _____

YOUR SIGNATURE _____ TIME _____ SECTION _____

Please check below any of the following reasons for taking this test that apply to you

_____ I am joining the armed forces.
_____ I need the scores for an employer.
_____ The results of this test are necessary for entrance into a college.
_____ Other. (Please write below if none of the above are applicable.)

_____

A copy of your test results will also be sent to your home address.

The receptionist will ask for your signature; please have your driver's license or other legal identification ready.

NOTE: IF THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ON THIS FORM IS FOUND TO BE INCORRECT, THE TESTING CENTER CHIEF EXAMINER CAN REFUSE TO ADMINISTER THE TEST AND THE SCORES OF COMPLETED TESTS WILL BECOME INVALID. THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA CAN ALSO REFUSE TO ISSUE A HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY CERTIFICATE BASED ON YOUR TEST RESULTS.

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE--OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Date beginning the test _____

Date finishing the test _____

Date paid _____

Amount _____

I.D. checked _____ Driver's license number

Other I.D. (specify) _____

Type of test (practice, regular GED, retest--circle appropriate one)

1 2 3 4 5

Test	Raw Scores	Standard Scores	U.S. Percentile	Form
1. Writing Skills Test				
2. Social Studies Test				
3. Science Test				
4. Reading Skills Test				
5. Mathematics Test				
TOTAL				
Average Standard Score				

Figure 5. Sample Intake Information

Many centers ask examinees to fill out additional forms at the same time that they register. These forms may include:

- Authorization for release of scores or student records
- "In-house" work sheets for GED scores and other information
- Permission to use the client's name to publicize the GED Test
- An understanding of GED testing room policies and procedures such as the use of scratch paper, no talking, and so on

Many centers also distribute information on tutoring or educational services and procedures for applying for the certificate.

Use of a Practice Test

Testing centers in California report that administering a GED practice test to clients has had a significant (positive) impact on their programs. Almost all commercial GED Test preparation books contain timed practice tests. In addition, the two major practice tests that are available on the market provide a number of benefits:

- Prepare clients for actual format.
- Build confidence and allay test anxiety.
- Yield predictive scores.
- Serve as quick and easy means of verifying abilities.
- Give evidence as to strengths and weaknesses that can be used for initial diagnosis and for readiness.
- Suggest placement for preparation class; student will not have to sit through what he or she already knows.
- Determine level of GED Test materials to use.
- Give information on general test-taking skills.
- Permit client to see his or her abilities; gentle discourager for not-ready client.
- Reduce incidence of failure.
- Suggest an order for administering the "real" tests that is most beneficial to clients.

Foreign Language Editions

The administration, timing, and scoring requirements for the Spanish and French versions are described in the GED Examiner's Manual. Some centers

have Spanish-speaking proctors as well as applications and flyers printed in Spanish. GED Test preparation classes are offered in Spanish in a few areas of the state.

Applicants should be informed that some states will not issue a certificate based on the Spanish or French version unless the applicant passes an English proficiency examination. In addition, occasionally here in California employers will not accept a certificate based on the Spanish edition.

Frequently, people ask why the GED Test cannot be developed in more languages. The answer can be attributed primarily to two things: time and cost. In addition, certain conditions must be met before the GED Testing Service might consider the possibility. These conditions include the following:

1. The test items must be developed in the foreign language for the test to be valid and reliable. In other words, a simple translation of the English edition into a foreign language edition will not ordinarily result in valid and reliable tests.

2. For an equitable standard for comparison, a norm must be established from test results of high school seniors who are attending schools where the foreign language is the primary language of instruction.

3. The number of seniors enrolled in high schools where the foreign language is the primary language of instruction must be sufficient to provide an equitable norm.

4. If the test norms are obtained in a foreign country, judgments must be made about the comparability of the country's grade levels and curriculum to those of high schools in the U.S. For example, what level is comparable to grade twelve in the U.S.? These judgments are often difficult to make.

The Spanish and French editions were developed because all the above conditions were met. The test norms were obtained in Puerto Rico and Canada, respectively, where the grade levels and curriculum are quite similar to those in the U.S. In the case of the French edition, the ministries of education of the Canadian provinces that provide a GED program unanimously agreed on the need for a French edition, and they paid for its development and standardization.

Finally, even if other foreign language editions of the GED Test could be developed and norms established, the question would still remain as to whether states would issue a certificate based on these editions.

Special Editions

Persons desiring to use the braille, large print, or audiocassette tapes are no longer required to obtain approval through the GED office. However, certification of a disability is still required and must be approved by the Examiner and on file at the testing center. Specifically:

1. The center may administer a special edition of the GED Test when the Examiner determines that a special edition is appropriate for the requesting client.

2. To make a judgment as to appropriateness, the Examiner must receive a letter that specifies the disability. This letter must come from a medical doctor, psychologist, educational diagnostician, guidance counselor, or social worker who is thoroughly familiar with the candidate.

3. The letter must include a complete list of necessary modifications, including test format (braille, audiocassette tapes, and large print), any special aides or equipment needed, suggested administrative strategies, and so on. A copy of the list should be sent to the candidate to ensure his or her full understanding of the examination conditions.

4. Upon receipt of the letter, the Examiner may make the determination as to specific testing conditions. (The Examiner may, when possible, wish to administer a regular [or cassette] form of a pretest to familiarize the candidate with the GED and to confirm or further evaluate the disability.)

5. When the Examiner has determined the special edition and administration modifications that are necessary, he or she may order from GED the special edition (or may go ahead and administer a special edition test if the center stocks it on a yearly basis). In either case, the approval of the State Administrator is not required. The determination is left to the judgment of the Examiner. However, the center must maintain on file the original letter of verification from the professional.

For specific information regarding the administration of these special versions, refer to GED Examiner's Manual. An important note to remember is that these versions do not need to be timed. Just remember that clients who use these special editions must have medical certification that is approved by the Examiner and is on file at the center. Also, clients requiring the use of two forms at a time may do so. Avoid charging more of these persons, if possible. Finally, persons with a diploma who subsequently suffered mental damage and now have been rehabilitated are not eligible to take the GED under current policy. In 1981, the Testing Service was asked to reconsider this policy for persons desiring to take the GED to seek employment. The Testing Service, however, felt that the policy should remain the same.

The Palo Alto VA Hospital has obtained permission to test veterans and nonveterans free of charge. (Call 415-493-5000, ext. 5931.) Applicants at the VA Hospital are encouraged to take the pretest at no cost to them. (If a handicapped person requires an assistant, the examinee makes payment directly to the assistant.)

The Testing Room

The room where testing takes place should be a separate, quiet area, away from the school office. Obviously, the room should be comfortable, with appropriate lighting and temperature. Chairs should be spaced far enough apart to discourage collaboration. Also, all chairs should be in full view of the Examiner.

Some centers post signs in the room or write messages on the blackboard: "No talking," "No marking in books," or "Test over at 10:15."

Handing Out Test Materials

The Examiner should remove from the storage area the exact number of test booklets needed. A log (Figure 6) kept in the file cabinet should be maintained to show which test booklets are removed for each session. The log is a good way to keep track of the number of times a booklet has been used.

In the testing room, another log book, as shown in Figure 7, should be available for recording information such as examinees' names, form and serial number, time, and so on. Some centers permanently attach a slip of paper to the cover of each test. Then, as each candidate signs in on the log book, the Examiner pulls out a test; adds to the tally on the slip of paper attached to the test (another effective way to keep track of the number of times a test is used); records the form, serial number, and time in the log; and hands the test, answer sheet, and scratch paper to the candidate. Some centers give one test at a time and start everyone at the same time. Other centers start clients at different times. Depending on the test that the person is taking, the Examiner determines right then what time the examinee is to be finished and jots it down in the log book. In this way candidates may take different tests at different times throughout the day, and the Examiner simply has to run a finger down the column in the log book to keep track of the finishing time of examinees.

Dictionaries, reference materials, calculators, and computational aids are some of the materials prohibited in the testing area. The only things that are allowed to be taken in by examinees are purses.

Some centers use scratch paper that is recognizable at a glance. For example, one center passes out blue paper to examinees which allows the Examiner to identify that piece of paper immediately. Another center uses different color scratch paper for each test being taken or for each finishing time. Colors such as purple, pink, or orange will remind the Examiner at a glance who is taking math and who is to finish up by 10 a.m.

Centers may test as many persons at a time as they want as long as a proctor is present for a group 21 persons or more being tested and for every additional group of 20. Most centers in California test 20 or fewer persons at a time; therefore, proctors are not needed. However, other centers do test more than 20 at a time and, therefore, make use of a trained procter.

Setting and Humanizing the Climate

"Is there anyone present who would pay $10 to be somewhere else?" That is the question asked by Bonnie Stone, Coordinator of the Individualized Learning Center, Forsyth Technical Institute in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. She says that the question evokes laughter among examinees, relaxes them, and serves as a reminder that they are all in the same situation. She also tells the group her name and writes it on the blackboard.

Bonnie's next step is to give specific directions in a reassuring manner. She illustrates how to use the answer sheet and also explains how many answers are expected on the first test. Pointing out pencil sharpeners, snack machines, bathrooms, and smoking areas all help to make examinees feel at home.

Date of Test _____ Examiner _____

Name	Test No.	Out	In	Battery No.
	1			
	2			
	3			
	4			
	5			

Name	Test No.	Out	In	Battery No.
	1			
	2			
	3			
	4			
	5			

Name	Test No.	Out	In	Battery No.
	1			
	2			
	3			
	4			
	5			

Name	Test No.	Out	In	Battery No.
	1			
	2			
	3			
	4			
	5			

Name	Test No.	Out	In	Battery No.
	1			
	2			
	3			
	4			
	5			

Name	Test No.	Out	In	Battery No.
	1			
	2			
	3			
	4			
	5			

Figure 6. Examiner's Log of GED Tests

Date _____

Log for the General Educational Development Tests

Examinee's signature	Form	Test no.	Time checked out	Time returned

Figure 7. Sample Log/Test Accounting Sheet

But the most important part of her talk is trying to remove fears. She explains that no one can totally fail the GED Test; that students may retest later in problem areas rather than taking over the entire test. This brings a sigh of relief to the examinees.

At this point she shares some brief test-taking tips, which more experienced test takers use routinely. For example, an examinee should not leave any answer blank. With the odds five to one, why not guess? Also, the examinee should go back to a reading passage to dig out an answer. These and other tips about the wise use of time for a particular test all imply the same message: the Examiner and clients are after the same goal, a successful GED Test day.

During Testing

During testing a lot can be done to attend to the details of climate-setting. The Examiner can maintain the room temperature, preserve silence, and keep on hand extra pencils and scrap paper. Between tests, Bonnie recommends a good stretch to help combat tension. Breaks should be permitted; however, the procedure for leaving the room should be clearly established. No candidate should be allowed to leave until the test booklet, answer sheet, and scratch paper have been returned and logged in. Test booklets should be reviewed for pencil marks and missing pages.

If someone is caught cheating, the Examiner has the option of tearing up that person's answer sheet and not allowing him or her to retest for an indefinite period of time. The State Department of Education does not have any specific policy on cheating (neither does the Testing Service) but will try to support the Examiner's recommendation. For more information on test administration, please refer to GED Examiner's Manual.

After Testing

When candidates turn in their test materials, the Examiner should quickly log in the test booklet and review it for missing pages before allowing the candidates to leave. In this way, if something appears to be out of order, the examinee will still be available to answer questions. (A test was compromised recently at a center when the Examiner allowed the candidate to leave before it was discovered that four pages were missing from the test.) Before returning the booklets to the secure storage area, they should be reviewed thoroughly for pencil marks.

Scoring

Scoring is done in the manner that is most convenient for the Examiner. All that the Testing Service requires is that scoring be done by an Examiner, that scoring keys not be carried to the testing room or used until all examinees have left the area, and that the average standard score not be rounded off to the next higher value. (The decimal remainder should be dropped.) The candidate "passes" when he or she obtains an average score of 45 with no one score lower than 40. New scores on any of the subtests may be put together in the old

scores to make for a passing GED. Some centers ask candidates to remain to hear the results, while other centers send the results through the mail or call candidates at a later date.

After the tests have been scored, the scoring keys should be returned to the secure area and the scores recorded on the Official Score Report Form. How long should clients' answer sheets be kept? It varies and really depends on the center's needs and space limitations. Some centers have found it helpful to keep answer sheets for up to 30 days. Other centers destroy them sooner, perhaps after a week. A rule of thumb is to keep the answer sheets until the center is fairly certain that an examinee will not dispute the scores.

Transporting/Moving Test Materials

Most centers know that test booklets, answer sheets, or scoring keys may not, under any condition, be moved from the testing center. If the center identifies a need to go to another agency to test on site, then it is possible that the Examiner may be given permission to hand-carry the tests and answer sheets to the test location. Authorization for this action is reflected in the center's annual contract through an addendum. (See Chapter 2 for further information.)

Retesting

Every center establishes its own retesting policy. Most policies reflect a balance of fairness to the client with trying to uphold the integrity of the test and avoid abuses. Many centers demand a three- to six-month wait or that the client enroll in a local tutoring program. Other centers are less stringent.

The policy is really up to the center. Following are some things a center should consider in developing a retesting policy:

- The only persons eligible to be retested are those who have completed the battery and failed to meet the requirements for the High School Equivalency Certificate (45 average and no one score lower than 40). Persons who have passed the GED Test may <u>not</u> retake it to earn higher scores to meet job or college requirements. A few institutions require that GED candidates applying to their programs earn scores at a level higher than that required for the certificate. (Thus, some examinees achieve scores sufficient to earn a certificate but below the levels required for admission to the college of their choice.) However, the GED Testing Service does not permit persons to be retested under such circumstances. The GED Test is a vehicle for assessing knowledges and skills normally associated with a twelfth grade education; it is unfortunate that higher score requirements by employers or universities may leave some examinees ineligible for admission. The GED Testing Service recommends that these institutions review their admissions requirements for High School Equivalency Certificate holders and consider developing alternative admissions criteria or procedures for such individuals.

The Department of Education recommends that clients needing to achieve a higher score to gain entrance into a program do not attempt the real test until they have scored high enough on the practice tests to almost guarantee the needed scores.

- In some cases a candidate may only have to retake a couple of the tests, such as those in which he or she did not make the minimum test score of 40 and any others that might increase their chances of achieving the average test score of 45. That choice is left up to the center and the examinee. The client may retake as many of the five tests as he or she wishes, but must at least retake those in which he or she did not score a 40 minimum.

- A different form of the test must be used. For example, if during the initial testing the client completed Form A, he or she should take Form B for the retest.

- A candidate may be retested up to three times within a 12-month period. (The number of retestings is limited by the fact that each center stocks no more than three test forms.)

- Examiners should routinely ask all GED applicants about any previous attempts to pass the test--where, when, and so on. In one area of the state, a Chief Examiner was able to trace clients who traveled from center to center, one day after another, to retake each test several times. Obviously, these kinds of abuses are contrary to the intent of GED.

  The GED Testing Service says that two-thirds of all persons who, without receiving remediation, retake a multiple choice test like the GED test would increase or decrease their scores by five points. One person out of 20 would increase or decrease his or her score by ten points. And one person out of a 1,000 might increase or decrease his or her score by about 15 points. These figures, of course, do not necessarily reflect any learning that may or may not have taken place. Rather, they reflect the person's mental condition on a particular day and the test form variation.

  According to statistical theory, "even a monkey could feasibly be successful eventually (if it were to retake the test over and over) due to the policy of taking the best retest scores rather than the average." Luckily, most testing centers recognize that learning does not take place overnight and do have fairly stringent retest policies.

- On a rare occasion, a center may have a client who passed the GED many years ago but lost the scores and is unable to obtain a copy from the original testing center. In such a case, if no one, anywhere, has a record of the candidate's scores, then that person may retest.

- The final determination as to if and when a person is eligible for a retest is made by the Examiner. In accordance with local center policy, the Examiner, not the referral agency, must make the decision.

- An accurate record of a candidate's scores (partial and complete) must be kept forever. Actual answer sheets may be destroyed after a reasonable amount of time (recommend 30 days). Once a candidate has retested and passed the test, his or her scores must be maintained on file, and previous scores may be destroyed.

Chapter 5

Testing Follow-Up

Chapter summary:

Scores

- The GED is based on twelfth grade equivalency. There is no official interpretation of ninth, tenth, or eleventh grade equivalency.
- Centers must maintain permanent records of scores.
- The State Department of Education maintains only those scores belonging to persons who apply for the High School Equivalency Certificate. Copies of scores will be forwarded to agencies upon request by client.
- Clients seeking copies of scores should contact the center at which they were tested. Exceptions include some persons in military (DANTES) and persons with a California High School Equivalency Certificate (State Department of Education).

To apply for High School Equivalency Certificate, provide the following:

- Application signed by client and Examiner
- Official copy of scores (45 average with no one score lower than 40)
- Money order made out to California State Department of Education

Other Requirements

- Applications must be submitted in complete form in order to be processed.
- Persons may apply for a certificate in person. They should call before they come to the State Department of Education.

Raw GED test scores are converted to standard and percentile scores. For the average standard score to be obtained, the decimal remainder must be dropped off, not rounded off. The standard scores for the five tests should be added together, then divided by five. If the average results in a decimal remainder, it should be dropped. That is, record only the whole number value. Do not round off to the next higher value.

Explanation of Scores

To pass the GED in California, a client must obtain an average score of 45, with no one score lower than 40. Often candidates are confused by this standard score. For example, a 60 suggests to them that they missed a lot of questions. This, of course, is not the case. In fact, the standard score means virtually nothing to the candidate. What is more meaningful is the percentile score. For example, the Examiner may explain that the examinee scored at the 84th percentile, meaning that he or she did better than 84 percent of graduating seniors would do if they were to take the same test. (Or you could say that if 100 seniors took the test, only about 16 would do better.)

Centers with a very high volume of examinees usually put this explanation in writing to ensure that the meaning does not get lost in the rush. At one center the Examiner will call the examinee and explain the results. Then he or she will give the examinee the scores, along with a slip of paper that reads something like this:

> The five tests of the GED measure your general educational development against that of graduating high school seniors.
>
> The scores tell you how you rank in comparison to a group of seniors. Examine the figures entered for each test in the column marked "percentile rank" on the score sheet. These figures show how many graduating seniors scored lower than you on each test.
>
> For example, look at your percentile score for Test 1, which may be 79. That means that you did better than 79 percent of the high school seniors! It also means that only 21 percent scored higher than you did.

One should remember that passing or not passing involves twelfth grade equivalency. There is no established relationship of GED Test scores to the ninth, tenth, and eleventh grade levels. Some years ago the GED Testing Service suggested a relationship, but not today. Programs requiring a showing of ninth, tenth, or eleventh grade equivalency should set their own relationships to GED Test scores. Such grade equivalency standards often vary from institution to institution, depending on local standards. Therefore, be aware that they are not GED's standards.

Examiner's Role

In some centers, the Examiner is the only person to have contact with the client. So what he or she says and how it is said plays an important role in influencing a dropout to set goals and develop confidence.

When a client passes, he or she must be informed of the availability of the High School Equivalency Certificate and how to apply (California Administrative Code, Title 5, Section 11531). One Examiner tells examinees that by applying for the certificate "they are registered with the state and have a special number of their own." The Examiner should also explain to the candidate what passing actually means in terms of job or school value and describe any educational opportunities such as the local adult school diploma program, community college, or university that the candidate might wish to pursue.

If a client does not pass, the Examiner should point out his or her areas of strength and needs and where to go for help. For example, the Examiner might tell the candidate where to find tutoring classes. Some centers provide the candidate with written information on tutoring classes. In fact, those centers take care not to let the client leave without this information. They try to turn the experience into a positive one by encouraging the client to the extent possible.

Consider the following dialogue, which took place in one of California's testing centers. Note how the Examiner presents the good news before the bad to "soften the blow," and then leads back into a positive statement:

Examiner: "In looking at your scores, John, I see that you did a good job in social studies, science, and math. In fact, you reached the state minimum and passed those tests."
(Pauses. Lets John look for himself at all five scores. John sees that the other two are not as high, so he knows what is coming.)

Examiner: "As you can see here, John, your scores were not as high in reading and writing."

(Pauses. John is disappointed but sees for himself that he will have to improve his reading and writing.)

Examiner: "It looks like you just need to brush up on these subjects, maybe wrestle with writing, especially. I am sending you to a tutor who will be looking for you. His name is Mr. Sills, and his class meets on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings. Here is his telephone number. We'll see how you're doing in a few weeks." (Examiner jots John's name down on his calendar so that he will not forget to call.)

John: "I guess a few weeks is not that bad."

Examiner: "No. And next time you will not have to take the whole GED over. We will shoot at just the two tests."

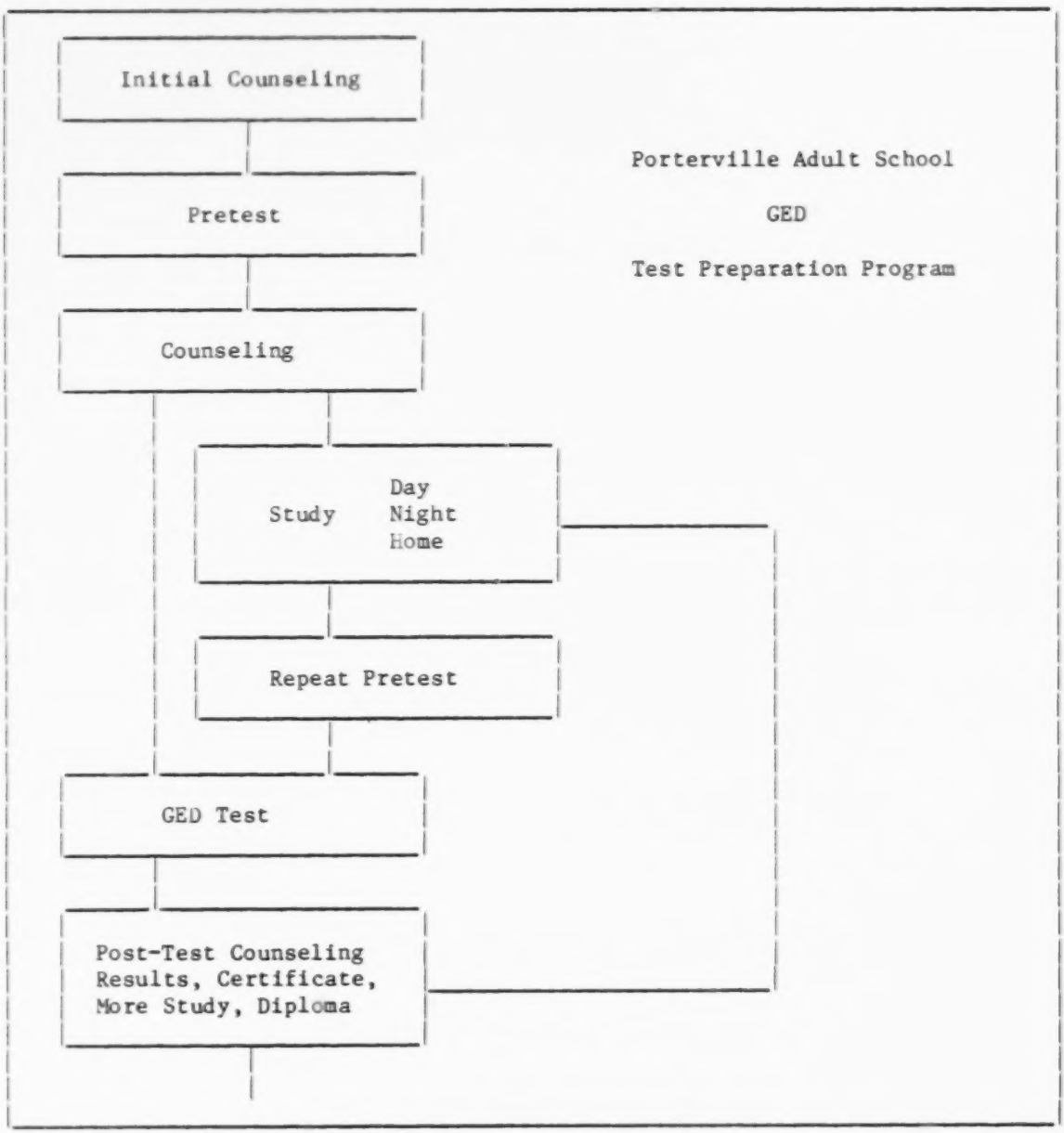
(John leaves relieved that he will only have to take two tests over.)

Other centers have the tutor come in, introduce himself or herself to the client, and set up an appointment before the client leaves. These strategies seem to lessen the candidate's dispair and improve the chances that he or she will follow-up rather than getting discouraged and dropping out of sight.

Counseling

Counseling is an important aspect of the Examiner's role because, besides advising clients about the GED before they take it (and explaining scores once they have taken it), he or she is the key person guiding them in the next step. The Examiner plays a pivotal role in encouraging clients to continue, to come back and try again, and to develop and shoot for goals.

Following is a description and flowchart of the GED counseling program at one testing program, located at Porterville Adult School:



Porterville Adult School, Porterville, California, has been an authorized General Educational Development (GED) testing center since 1968 and tests about 150 people per year. Perhaps some of the things the center does would be useful at other centers.

The preceding flow diagram portrays the counseling and testing program. Note that anyone who wants to take the GED Test must first be counseled to determine eligibility, to explain the test, and to give the options that are available. The initial options are to take the test or the pretest, although a few people insist on study even before pretesting. At the Porterville Center, the pretest is the Official GED Practice Test, which was developed by the GED Testing Service and is available from the Cambridge Book Company.

If the pretest is passed with reasonably high scores (48 or higher average and no individual score below 40), the examinee is advised to take the test, although many will prefer a brush-up to make sure that they pass. Examinees who score below these levels are advised to embark upon a course of study to improve their skills. "Brush-ups" or more extensive study are available through traditional night school classes and daytime adult classes specifically for this purpose. Some examinees elect to study on their own, but this is discouraged unless there is no alternative because:

- Most people need the discipline of regular class attendance and study atmosphere.
- It is desirable that a teacher be on hand to assist and explain.
- The various home-study books can be either intimidating, especially in the area of math, or else become a "security blanket," resulting in undue delay in testing while the book is carried about with the mistaken notion that mastery of its contents is somehow a guarantee of passing.

In counseling examinees prior to testing, it is desirable that they be informed of certain things that will help ensure their best performance. They are as follows:

- All questions should be answered, even those requiring guessing, because there is no penalty for guessing and some wild guesses may be correct. Some examinees are reluctant to make even educated guesses and need to be assured that, in this test battery, it is acceptable.
- Examinees should not be afraid to change an answer. Despite the myth of the first answer being most likely correct, research shows that people are more likely to change <u>to</u> than <u>from</u> a correct answer.
- There are time limits on each test in the battery, but they are quite generous and are intended primarily to keep people moving along. As a gauge of their progress toward completion of each

test, examinees should look at the number of items in the booklet, not the number of "slots" on the answer sheet.

After a program of study has been completed, a second pretest may be administered to determine whether there is a good likelihood of passing. It is highly desirable that the examinee pass the regular GED test on the first attempt because many who fail, even by the slightest margin, are reluctant to risk another failure.

Post-test counseling is important because the test report needs interpretation. Too often standard scores are thought to be the number correct and percentile scores the percent correct. The examinee may say, for example, "Is that all I could do on it?" when looking at a comparatively strong 70th percentile. When informed that he or she had exceeded 70 percent of the nation's high school graduates, the client can see his or her performance in a clearer and more positive perspective.

In California, a state certificate is optional, but examinees who pass the GED are advised to apply for one because of the following:

- A certificate is easier for many employers to comprehend.
- It is an attractive document, suitable for framing.
- Certificates are recognized across the nation.
- It is a permanent state record no matter what might become of the local center and its files.

In the case of a failed test, it is important to analyze the reason(s) and explain what remediation is in order. Sometimes the counselor can point out, "If all the scores had been as high as your reading comprehension score, you would have passed the test." This softens the harshness of reporting a failure without giving false hope.

With the two-level passing system used in most states (for example, 45 average, none below 35), it is sometimes misleading to say, "You only had two scores below the passing level." This approach implies that merely passing the tests will produce a passing average score, which is rarely the case.

Maintaining Permanent Scores

All GED Test scores must be typed on the official score reporting form and given to the candidate and any other requesting party as approved by the candidate. The candidate should be instructed to keep his or her copy. Incidents have occurred in which the candidate lost his or her copy and could not recall the whereabouts of the permanent records.

The testing center is responsible for keeping (forever) permanent records of test scores. The center should keep "partials" as well as scores of those persons who complete the whole battery. If the center ever closes, it must inform the State Department of Education as to where the records will be kept. Santa Clara County destroys files after two years and keeps 3 by 5 cards (with clients' signatures). Some centers have tried putting cards on microfilm, with varying degrees of success.

An official copy of GED Test scores is submitted to the State Department of Education if the client chooses to apply for a High School Equivalency Certificate. The scores then become part of the state record system. (This is one of the obvious advantages of applying for a certificate.) However, the local testing center is still responsible for maintaining the scores permanently. If the testing center ever closes, the Examiner must inform the Department of the whereabouts of the permanent records.

Obtaining Copies of Scores

Copies of scores may be obtained from a number of sources in accordance with the following:

- Persons who have applied for a California High School Equivalency Certificate (since 1974) may obtain copies of scores by communicating with the GED Office, State Department of Education, 721 Capitol Mall, Sacramento, CA 95814, (916) 323-2572.

- Official copies of GED Test scores may be requested from the GED Testing Service in Washington, D.C., for individuals tested at the following locations:

  1. Military personnel tested overseas after September, 1974
  2. Coast Guard personnel tested after January, 1975
  3. Overseas civilians tested after November, 1966
  4. Fort Jackson personnel tested after March, 1975
  5. Federal prison inmates tested after 1954
  6. Michigan state prisons inmates tested after 1957

- Military personnel tested overseas and in the United States before September 1, 1974:

  DANTES--Transcript Service
  P.O. Box 2879
  Princeton, NJ 08541
  Telephone (toll-free) 800-257-9484

- Military personnel tested on military duty within the United States (after September 1, 1974) are tested through the local official GED Testing Center in the state in which the installation is located.

1. Coast Guard personnel tested before January 1975

   DANTES Transcript Service
   P.O. Box 2879
   Princeton, NJ 08541
   Telephone (toll-free) 800-257-9484

2. Overseas civilians tested before November, 1966, contact the center at which you were tested.

3. Prison inmates tested in federal prisons before 1954 or in Michigan before 1957

- All other persons contact the center at which the examinee was tested.

High School Equivalency Certificates

Education Code sections 51420-51427 and California Administrative Code, Title 5, Regulations, sections 11530-11532, authorize the Department of Education to issue High School Equivalency Certificates to persons who on the GED earn an average score of 45 with no one score lower than 40. Applicants must be at least eighteen years old or "would have graduated had they stayed in school and followed the prescribed course of study" (Education Code Section 51420[c]). Since Title 5 Regulations authorize certain other persons to take the GED (Chapter 4) who may not yet be eligible for a High School Equivalency Certificate, those persons may still apply for the certificate; they will receive a letter acknowledging receipt of the application, and the certificate will be forwarded on the person's eighteenth birthday.

The advantages of applying for a certificate are as follows:

- Permanent state records will be kept of candidates' scores. Even though testing centers are supposed to maintain copies of scores, having scores maintained in the state records system serves as a double safeguard.

- Many employers prefer the certificate to the scores. The certificate, in fact, not the scores, in California is deemed to be equivalent to a diploma for purposes of employment in all state and local public agencies.

- Copies of scores will be forwarded, free of charge, at any time by the State Department of Education to employers or agencies, as requested by the client.

- The certificate is recognized across the nation.

- The certificate carries an official seal and the signatures of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the President of the State Board of Education. Many GED clients hang the certificate on their wall. A few GED centers issue their own official-looking certificate. In such cases special care should be taken to ensure that clients understand that the certificate is not the official GED certificate. Frequent misunderstandings result in a great number of calls to the State Department of Education

from persons wanting a duplicate of what they say was a state GED certificate when, in fact, it was a local certificate given by the testing center. Clients become angry or embarrassed when the Department reports that it did not issue them a certificate.

In order to apply for a certificate, a candidate must submit to GED, State Department of Education, 721 Capitol Mall, Sacramento, CA 95814-4785, the following:

- A completed application signed by the Examiner (original signature)
- A copy of the official scores signed by the Examiner
- An $8 money order made out to the State Department of Education

Unfortunately, the State Department of Education is unable to keep scores or incomplete applications. Therefore, it is imperative that the testing center or the applicant submit all three items at the same time. The client should indicate on the application a permanent address to which the certificate should be sent. Many certificates are returned marked "addressee moved" or "incomplete address." If need be, the applicant should indicate the address of a relative or the testing center.

Old GED Test scores are acceptable for making application for a certificate, but often they are difficult to verify through the original testing center.

Scores submitted may also be from tests taken at different centers. The best scores will be taken from each test. If together they meet the minimum state score requirements, then they will count as passing.

Persons who lose their certificate and request a duplicate will be charged the current fee for a new certificate. Consequently, clients should be told to retain their original certificate. The State Department of Education will issue copies of GED Test scores free of charge. However, centers should remember that the Department of Education only maintains copies of scores for state certificates issued after May, 1974. All other scores must be obtained through the original testing center or DANTES (military).

All correspondence should be addressed to the "GED Unit"; otherwise, it will be opened by other offices before it filters down to the GED office, causing a delay. All mail should be clearly marked "GED Program." Expect a waiting period of two weeks to two months, although at peak workload times of the year the delay may be as long as three months. Clients should wait that long before calling to inquire about the status of an application, since applications are logged in by day received and are difficult to trace except in the case of emergency. However, if after three months the certificate has not been received, the client should call. Some candidates wait too long, calling ten or eleven months later to report that they never received their certificate.

Questions about certificates may be answered by calling (916) 323-2572 or 323-2573.

In summary, all candidates who apply for a certificate should be advised to:

- Keep copies of scores indefinitely.

- Contact the GED Office if their mailing address changes before the certificate is received.

- Contact the GED Office if, after three months, they have not received their certificate. They should not wait any longer!

- Keep their certificate "forever" because they will have to pay for a duplicate.

Persons may visit the office between 7:30 a.m. and 3:45 p.m. to receive their certificate in person. However, hand-carried scores from the testing center must be in a sealed envelope. Candidates who walk in will have to wait approximately five minutes. NOTE: The physical location is different from the mailing address, so visitors should call to obtain the address and to make sure that someone will be on hand to issue the certificate.

California High School Proficiency Examination (CHSPE)

The CHSPE (pronounced "chess-pea") is a test that is frequently confused with the GED. It is a completely different test with a distinct orientation. Originally designed for the bright-but-bored school population, the test yields a simple pass or fail and allows for students to leave school early with parental permission. For specific information in regard to the CHSPE, call the CHSPE Consultant, State Department of Education, (916) 445-0297.

Any person who has passed the CHSPE may take the GED if he or she has met other GED eligibility requirements.

Proficiency Law

In 1977 a law was enacted that required districts to develop proficiency standards to be met by students during their years at school and as a prerequisite for high school graduation. This law (Hart AB 3408/AB 65) is sometimes confused with the CHSPE. The chart in Figure 8 is intended to clarify any differences.

Since 1981 districts have asked, "May GED tests be used to satisfy Hart/ proficiency requirements for adult students enrolled in a diploma program?" Appendixes C and D contain the State Department of Education's response to districts and a statement from the GED Testing Service on this very issue.

Center Cooperation

Since there are so many GED testing agencies in California, it is important that centers work together in trying to achieve the common goals of providing services to students. Networking may be all the more important because of the size of the testing program in this state. One center developed a grid of some 12 centers within a three-county area. The grid, which was distributed to all these centers, provides information on the following:

- Chief Examiner and contact number

Test	Availability	Age	Content	Scoring	Relationship to postsecondary academic achievement	Passage allows for
GED (General Educational Development) Contact number: (916) 323-4676	Upon demand. Given at 250 testing centers in California.	18. Under certain conditions, a 17-year-old may qualify. Regardless of age, cannot be enrolled in a secondary school.	Emphasis on application of knowledge of principles and generalizations in five areas: writing skills, social studies, science, reading skills, math. Based on knowledge comparable to that acquired by persons completing twelfth grade.	For each of the five test areas, provides numerical and percentile scores, based on nationwide standardization. Scores received immediately.	Research suggests relationship between scores and postsecondary achievement.	High School Equivalency Certificate, deemed in California law to be a high school diploma for purposes of employment by all state and local public agencies. Recognized nationally (by most institutions) as equivalent to a high school diploma.
CHSPE (California High School Proficiency Exam) Contact number: (916) 445-0297	Three times a year. Pre-registration required.	At least second term sophomore or 16 years old. May or may not be enrolled in school.	Emphasis on life skills--application to practical, day-to-day living situations of reading and computation skills. Must also demonstrate writing proficiency. Based on skill levels comparable to those attained by persons completing twelfth grade.	Pass/fail basis. Does not provide any numerical or other comparative scores. Approximately six weeks scoring delay.	Not designed to be predictive of postsecondary achievement.	Certificate of Proficiency, the only certificate specifically set forth in California law as fully equivalent to a high school diploma. Also allows students, with parental approval, to leave school early.
Proficiency Standards (Hart AB 3408/AB 65) Contact number: (916) 445-0297	Varies from district to district.	Minimum determined by each district. Law requires "at least once in grades 4-6, once in grades 7-9, and twice in grades 10-11."	Varies from district to district. District must at least assess the basic skills in reading comprehension, writing, and computation.	Varies from district to district.	Not designed to be predictive of postsecondary achievement, except to the extent that proficiency in the basic skills is necessary for such achievement.	High school diploma, as long as required coursework is completed. Also provides for early identification of strengths and weaknesses in particular skill areas.

Figure 8. Simplified Comparison of GED to CHSPE and Hart AB 3408/AB 65

- Testing times
- Fee
- Retest policy
- Number of persons tested at a time
- Appointment or drop-in basis
- Availability of Spanish GED
- Tutoring service or referrals
- GED pretesting
- Counseling
- Interest or aptitude testing
- If the center is open year-round or on the normal school schedule

Verifying scores, sharing recordkeeping techniques, learning about referral agencies and interdistrict training activities, and keeping up with trends in the area are some of the reasons for working closely with other centers.

Another advantage surfaces when retesting problems occur. Last year, for example, centers in one area of the state compared notes and determined that some examinees were traveling from center to center, retaking tests one day after another. Centers had no idea that these persons were doing this until one Examiner figured it out and contacted other centers.

Sometimes an Examiner will find a client cheating or altering scores on the reporting form. And sometimes the Examiner will refuse to retest that person. In such a case it helps to know the neighboring Examiners. By informing them about the incident, everybody is able to work together to support the Examiner's efforts to uphold the integrity of the GED.

Chapter 6

GED Test Preparation

Chapter summary:

GED Preparation

- GED instruction may involve a review of high school subjects with emphasis on reading comprehension, reasoning and analytical skills, and test-taking techniques.
- Teacher methodology may include lecture, demonstration, group work, and individualized instruction.
- The GED practice tests are helpful in determining a student's learning plan on entering a GED Test preparation program as well as when he or she is ready to leave the program to take the test.
- There are many ways to publicize the program that will increase recruitment and validate the worth of the program.
- GED is a promotable program because it is a low-cost community service that benefits not only the client but many others in one way or another.

What makes an effective GED program? Teaching staff, materials, assessment procedures, support services, and many other factors come into play in a GED Test program.

Most centers that offer a preparation program pretest clients for reading ability. If they test lower than eighth grade, they are placed in an ABE (Adult Basic Education) class. If they test higher, they go into a learning lab situation (as well as a basic English and math class) or an actual GED Test preparation class.

Characteristics of GED Labs and Classes

The general characteristics of GED learning labs in California appear to be as follows:

- Open-entry, open-exit, self-paced instruction
- Pretests and post-tests available in separate subjects
- Between 5 and 15 persons at any one time
- With aides, teacher mainly as a guide or helper
- Competency-based curriculum
- Individual lesson packets developed, based on client needs and long- and short-term goals
- Remedial, developmental reading, and math skills
- GED curriculum, but pre-GED remedial materials used when necessary
- Three to 20 hours a week

The general characteristics of GED Test preparation classes appear to be:

- Semester review of all five types of GED tests
- Structural classes
- Open-entry, open-exit
- GED practice test given
- At least three hours a week
- May cover orientation to test, practice test, counseling, review materials, and test-taking workshop

Some programs are a combination of the above. For example, students may take a lab but also receive small-group instruction in English and math a couple times a week or even daily. Some programs utilize a self-check sheet

which students use to keep track of test scores for each unit covered. Often lab and classroom teachers reserve a certain portion of the day to work with newcomers.

Intake and Counseling Procedures

The following are some of the commonly used intake and counseling procedures:

- Student is given reading and other diagnostic test.
- Counselor or teacher reviews previous transcript and results of tests, discusses long- and short-range goals, and defines program of study.
- Student is enrolled in ABE or GED classes, depending on reading ability.
- Periodic progress evaluations are made among counselor, teacher, and student. These may also be informal evaluations.
- Job/vocational counseling is given.

Diagnostic Instruments for Assessing Need

Programs seem to use a variety of methods for assessing where the student should be placed. Many programs use the Official GED Practice Tests. Many others use teacher-prepared tests or surveys. Some programs use a more informal assessment, such as a counselor questionnaire or interview. The value of the assessment is the guidance it gives to the teacher, who wants to provide the instruction that the client needs, and to the counselor, who wants to place the client in the correct class. In some programs this means a basic writing and math lab if the client achieves lower than eighth grade on the WRAT test. In other programs the ABLE quick check is administered to determine which Gates McGintie test to take. Results of the latter will determine if the client is ready for a regular GED preparation test. One program uses the final exam for a math proficiency course to assess competency in basic computational skills. Other placement instruments frequently used include General Education Performance Index (GEPI), McGraw Hill pretesting, TABE, and standardized reading tests.

Instructional Program

In many programs a GED class is offered that involves a teacher lecture, a demonstration, and group work for most of the class period. The curriculum is a review of high school subjects or else just math and English. GED practice tests are given periodically throughout the semester-long class. In some of these classes a math, spelling, or vocabulary quiz is given each day.

One-to-one tutoring with an aide or other instructional helper is available through some programs. Subjects covered are usually determined by a pretest.

Determining Readiness

How is it determined that the student is ready to leave the GED preparation program and take the test? By far the most frequently cited in the survey:

Official GED Practice Tests. Other means of determining readiness are pretests in textbooks, the General Education Performance Index, or instructor/student feelings and recommendations.

Communication Flow

Most centers cite a frequent and informal means of communication among the counselor, the teacher, and the Examiner. Some note daily or weekly contact, either face-to-face or via the telephone. A couple of centers cite the faculty bulletin or written communications. Some centers cite constant communication as to the progress of students and the materials they are using. In most programs, the teacher refers a student to the counselor or Examiner when the student appears ready to be tested. In turn the Examiner informs the teacher as to the scores achieved by the student. Nonpassing students are referred back to the counselor.

Effective GED Teacher

The following are characteristics of an effective GED teacher, based on research and interviews with approximately 27 teachers from around the state:

1. Is knowledgeable about working with adults and about the burgeoning drop-out, youth-in-transition population that more and more represents the California GED clientele.

2. Has fairly even content ability in all five GED areas, especially reading, English, and math.

3. Works with GED students only (e.g., eighth grade or above on certain placement tests) while pre-GED or ABE students work in another setting or come at another time.

4. Allows for open-entry, open-exit and meets with class at least twice a week.

5. Establishes an attendance policy and other ground rules, such as classroom behavior issues and a core period when everyone must be in attendance. Places the responsibility of coming to class and following the rules on the student. Teachers whose programs do not have such rules or whose set-up is a drop-in-when-you-want lab feel that their effectiveness is diluted.

6. Talks with students individually and assesses students to validate placement, goals, and interests during the first few class meetings. If assessment suggests that student should be in a basic class, refers appropriately.

7. Has a strong, visible principal or site manager who visits the GED setting early in the semester.

8. Has control over the classroom (physical environment). Is able to arrange setting as needed--bulletin boards, chairs, tables, testing stations.

9. Establishes self in role of advocate of student and link to opportunity. This role is reinforced daily.

10. Builds confidence in students through little and frequent successes beginning early in the semester. Tries to motivate students on a daily basis but stresses that real motivation belongs to the student. (Has a perspective on what he or she can and cannot do, and understands that motivation comes from the student.) Teachers frequently report using humor with students as an effective strategy.

11. Has a system of recordkeeping that provides information as to how the student is progressing and is available to students.

12. Provides ongoing assessment through exercises, work sheets, homework, class discussion, miniquizzes, and practice tests. (Homework activities are voluntary and expectations vary with the student. For some students, "successful" homework means completing an assignment. For others, it means simply not losing the handout.) Provides ongoing feedback to students.

13. Knows how to use GED practice tests and incorporate knowledge gained from student performance on them into the instruction; also uses GED practice tests for determining if students are ready to take the real test.

14. Stresses throughout the semester test-taking skills, reasoning skills, goal orientation/time management, and study skills. All lend themselves to large group lecture and discussion as well as to individual study.

15. Sees the development of reading skills as a vital part of the curriculum, although often if students are appropriately screened they are fairly good readers to begin with. Teachers then focus on reading critically and on outside reading.

16. Emphasizes math and grammar as everyday tools. These subjects are easily taught in large groups as well as individual situations.

17. Covers selected science and social studies concepts.

18. Provides students with many opportunities to read and interpret charts and graphs.

19. Relates instructional concepts to daily life and school/community resources. Often done through discussion of a textbook or real-life problem with the whole class.

20. Works with students in a variety of ways: large group lecture/discussion, small groups, peer tutoring, and individual work. GED programs that include lecture and total group work report more cohesiveness and appear to have a higher retention rate. An effective teacher knows how to vary activities and individualize within a large group setting.

21. Uses materials that best fit the style of the teacher and the individual levels of students.

Recruitment/Publicity

Some Examiners have pinpointed good publicity as the key to an ongoing, successful testing program. Many centers develop a flyer or brochure, which sometimes includes sample GED test questions. Some programs advertise in the local paper. Other means used by centers include a monthly newsletter to parents in the district; meetings with counselors; notices posted at strategic places around town; flyers and information sheets; radio release; communication with various agencies such as the Employment Development Department, Department of Rehabilitation, probation officers, librarians, community-based organizations; speaking engagements at civic club meetings; and so on.

Additional Strategies for Publicizing the GED Program

Publicizing is not just describing but also selling. The products are the GED and the opportunities it can provide for clients. GED, if done the right way, should attract publicity because it is a low-cost community service that benefits the client, the business community, and the public at large. An effective publicity campaign can be a valuable recruitment tool as well as a means for validating the worth of the GED for those who have sought the GED in the past.

The key to selling is to develop a long- and short-range plan that will create an image of visibility in the community among individuals, agencies, and the media. The plan should be considered as a way to talk about the center and its successes all year around, not just at graduation time. A confidence-building image that establishes a program as reliable, trustworthy, and long-standing will counter some of the esteem for schools and government that seems to have waned in recent years.

The publicity plan may be developed by the Examiner or by an advisory committee. Such a committee might include a counselor, a GED graduate, a current GED student, and an experienced advertising, newspaper, radio, or TV professional. The committee will develop a sense of responsibility and commitment to the program and define in writing what the members may do. They may wish to attend meetings of local business people, who will appreciate the interest they show.

Besides developing and implementing the publicity campaign, the committee should evaluate the plan. Keep in mind that evaluation is a guide to determine how to most effectively budget time, effort, and money. Even if the evaluation suggests that one phase is not effective, do not automatically eliminate it; the total impact of all phases of a campaign is what produces the crucial result.

The activities the center chooses will depend in part on who the potential clients are. Just as magazines, advertisers, and successful companies frequently seek to learn more about their clients, so should the center seek to define and refine its sense of clientele through surveys and other research methods.

Among the activities or strategies the center might choose for publicizing its GED services are the following:

1. Radio--Excellent for ideas that do not have to be seen to be understood. Messages should be simple, easy to understand, built around a central idea. Action words and stated benefits are imperative. Know each station, its programming, and its target audience. Stations run Public Service Announcements (PSA), but according to the Federal Communications Commission, radio stations are not governed by the regulations that govern TV stations. Approach station management or radio personalities who might support the center's cause. Sell them on the importance of the GED to their listeners. They will help the center decide whether a PSA, guest spot, or whatever else would be appropriate. They will also provide tips on writing proposed announcements, such as using "grabby" leads--"Did you know that . . ." and using "picture" words. Look for the long-range impact rather than just a one-time shot. Compile a list of radio station resource people and arrange for them to make announcements from time to time as you send them press releases (on graduations, registration, and so on). Send a follow-up thank you note every time an announcement is made. It helps to include a sentence or two about the impact the announcement has had on the program.

2. Television--Visit the public affairs director and, if possible, the station manager of all local TV stations. Sell them in five minutes on the widespread interest of the center's program to their broadcast areas. Charts and graphs are particularly helpful. Seek their advice on where in their program planning they might fit you. A PSA is only one possibility. Others are panel discussions, interviews, short segments inserted as features in other programs, spot announcements "community calendar," guest spots on news, and announcements by anchors, especially for timely events such as graduations. Other possibilities include coverage on special shows such as community, ethnic, or women's shows; news bits on news casts (e.g., a senior citizen receiving a GED certificate); and editorials--statements prepared at the station presenting management's point of view on community programs.

   Before visiting the station, center personnel should learn as much as possible about the target audience and should be very familiar with the station's programming. If you have a particular program in mind, you might try contacting the host or the (news) assignment editor. Make an arrangement to send press releases and notices of "special events" to the station. Always precede and follow with a telephone call. Compile a card file of stations, contacts, and all dates of contact. Also, develop a fact sheet--a list of readily available statistics collected from various sources in your area. You should also compile a file of anecdotes--GED "success stories" illustrating your varied clientele: reentry woman, senior citizen, and so on. Always send a thank you after each bit of coverage. It will strengthen relationships and improve your chances the next time. Also, get to know the anchors and reporters who cover education, who have been known to say, "The public does not realize how easy it is to pick up the phone and just call us with interesting tidbits that are happening in the community."

3. Wire services such as Associated Press and United Press International--According to Folio Magazine, the wire services are looking for pieces involving trends or predictions, seasonal items (Halloween, Christmas,

New Year's Day, and so on), famous personalities, the "odd-ball" subject and stories that contain information contrary to general wisdom, "particularly if it is said by a recognized expert." The impact of obtaining such valuable national publicity through a wire service can generate hundreds of requests. Such stories are even better if they are visual--prime game for an extraordinary photograph.

4. Graduation, recognition, and awards ceremonies, congratulating parties--These all afford excellent opportunities for staging a media "event." Try to invite a local anchor or TV personality to make the awards or say a few words. Contact stations to let them know <u>when</u> and <u>where</u>. Assure them that there will be plenty of space for TV cameras and taping equipment, and that "testimonials" will be available in addition to straight coverage. Then call to remind them the day of the event. Have the name and number of your agency available for a reporter to read or to flash on the screen. For any media coverage you might receive, ask the station to make you a copy to use at PTAs, service clubs, and so on.

5. Newspapers--Cultivate contacts with the education reporter and city editor. Invite reporters to attend events. If a human interest story occurs that might make a good feature story, call your contacts and ask if they would be interested in covering it.

6. Prominent community leaders--Seek, in the community, a well-known person who is willing to serve as role model and support the cause. A person who is a GED holder would be particularly effective. Obtain quotes and a photo. Such items may be used for press releases or for posters. Remember that slogans such as "Get your GED" are much catchier than "GED classes are available . . ." You can also seek donations of outdoor advertising space on which to erect a billboard poster of your role model.

7. Press releases--These are generally one-page flyers used to announce an upcoming event or a story of humanistic appeal that has just happened. A press release should be sent in accordance with a list of media contacts, community leaders, and organizations in your area. For information regarding the format and contact of a press release, consult a library book or local resource person familiar with press releases.

8. Newsletters--A periodic newsletter sent to educational leaders can provide an excellent opportunity for keeping the community up to date on your program. If a newsletter is not possible, an effective alternative is for you to get on the mailing lists to receive other organizations' newsletters. You can provide content for these newsletters on a monthly basis. Women's networking groups, business, local and state government, EDD, churches, Head Start, ethnic groups, judges, civic organizations, and senior citizens are all groups that can help spread the word about events pertaining to your program.

9. Other means of advertising include milk cartons (through advertising managers of companies distributing in your area), stickers, grocery bags, fairs, and exhibits (your Chamber of Commerce can keep you up to date), and speaking engagements (newspapers can print advance announcements; you can send a brief outline to those organizations you would like to address in the future).

Appendix A

GED Testing Center Checklist

1. GED Personnel

   a. The Chief and Alternate Examiners (and any other appropriate personnel, including proctors) have read all communiques regarding GED testing from the State Department of Education and the GED Testing Service and are familiar with all GED policies.

   b. All persons involved in GED are familiar with the provisions of the center's contract. A copy is on file for review.

   c. Any change in Chief or Alternate Examiners has been reported to the State Department of Education.

   d. Chief and Alternate Examiners are not in any way involved in GED preparation classes.

2. Facilities and Housekeeping

   a. The Chief or Alternate Examiner has a procedure for completing the annual statistical report; ordering and returning materials correctly; initiating payment to the GED Testing Service on a timely basis; and ensuring that the annual contract is signed and that appropriate copies are forwarded to the parties so indicated on the contract.

   b. All test materials are locked in a storage area at all times when not in use.

   c. Tests are accessible only to the Chief Examiner and Alternate Examiner.

   d. No other items are stored with GED materials.

   e. A register is maintained to log test booklets in and out by candidates' names, time and date, and booklet serial number.

   f. Any irregularity or unusual event pertaining to materials is promptly reported to the State Department of Education.

   g. Restricted materials are used at official testing center location only and are removed only for return to Washington, D.C.

   h. When restricted materials are returned to GED Testing Service, they are sent by UPS or by insured parcel post with return receipt requested.

3. Applicant Screening

   a. The center has a procedure for verifying, to the extent possible, the identity of candidates both when they initially apply and on the day of the test, to make certain the test is not being taken by proxy.

b. The center has a procedure for verifying, to the extent possible, that no examinee has a high school diploma.

c. The center has a procedure for verifying to the degree possible that all candidates are within 60 days of when they would have graduated had they stayed in school and followed the usual course of study.

d. A procedure has been established for the handling of written requests from the military, postsecondary educational agency, and prospective employer; with such a request, seventeen-year-olds who have been out of school for 60 days are not held to the 60-day limitation addressed in c. above.

e. The center has a procedure for handling retesting. This includes verifying to the extent possible any previous GED testing experiences, ensuring that a different form of the test is administered, and other requirements in accordance with GED retesting policies.

4. Testing Procedures

a. The Chief or Alternate Examiner is present at every testing session and scores all answer sheets.

b. Testing is conducted on a scheduled basis and is reasonable and "humane" for clients.

c. Testing services are provided to all segments of the community, including persons wanting to take the GED in Spanish or qualifying to take it in braille, large print, or audiocassette tapes.

d. Materials are inventoried at the beginning and end of each testing session and weekly when tests are not in use.

e. The testing room is large enough to accommodate examinees comfortably; they are spaced far enough apart to prevent copying or collaboration.

f. For testing sessions with more than 20 examinees, there is an additional person (proctor) present. For every additional group of 20, an additional proctor is present.

g. Personal possessions such as notebooks, papers, and large purses are not allowed in the testing facilities.

h. The testing room is quiet. Examinees are in full view of the examiner at all times.

i. Examinees are prohibited from leaving the testing area during the exams. The center has a procedure for smoking or restroom breaks at the end of each test.

j. No candidate is allowed to leave at the end of the testing period until he or she has turned in the test booklet, answer sheet, and scratch paper, and these items have been logged in and reviewed for missing pages and pencil marks.

5. Follow-Up

a. The center routinely gives the examinee a copy of his or her test scores.

b. Answer sheets are burned or shredded after being kept for a reasonable period.

c. Permanent records of test scores, partial and complete, are kept at the center. If the center closes down, the Examiner must inform the State Department of Education about the location of the permanent records.

d. Requirements and procedures for obtaining a Certificate of High School Equivalency or a Letter of Intent (seventeen-year-olds) are reviewed with successful candidates.

e. Retest and study options are discussed with unsuccessful candidates.

Appendix B

GED Testing Center Practices (1982 Survey)

(Based on June, 1982 Survey)

Forty-seven percent of California's GED centers test between 100 and 500 persons a year. Eleven percent test 500 or more. A significant portion test fewer than 100 each year. These centers are typically located in adult schools. In fact, 60 percent of the GED testing sites are associated with adult programs in a unified or high school district. Eight percent are affiliated with county offices. Fourteen percent are in community colleges, 4 percent in four-year colleges, and a small percentage in other agencies such as a VA medical center.

Testing Center Personnel

The Chief Examiner is usually an administrator, but at 29 percent of the testing sites he or she is a counselor or other, especially in small centers. Most centers have one Alternate Examiner. In 40 percent of the cases the Alternate is a counselor. A close second is a testing technician or secretary. Sometimes, especially in smaller centers, the Alternate is an administrator; in larger centers he or she is a technician or an aide.

In 41 percent of the centers, it is the Alternate who actually administers and scores the tests. In 25 percent of centers, especially small centers, the Chief Examiner takes care of these responsibilities. In 34 percent of the cases both Chief and Alternate administer and score tests on a regular basis.

Alternates are generally trained by the Chief Examiner through GED publications, the monthly GED newsletter, a review of policies, rules and regulations, and frequent meetings to share information and discuss any problems.

Proctors, needed only in centers testing 20 or more at a time, are trained by either the Chief or Alternate Examiner. In many centers they are trained through a discussion followed by observation by the Alternate. They are trained on these points: recordkeeping, including preparation of unofficial score report form and client progress sheet; test timing and security, including an understanding that the proctor does not administer tests; testing procedures such as restroom breaks and filling out answer sheets; and other things such as confidentiality and helping clients to feel at ease.

Test Registration

A surprisingly large number of centers offer testing on Saturdays as well as on week days and week nights. Forty-seven percent of all centers, especially smaller ones, have clients call to reserve space in advance. Thirty-eight percent require that clients register or pay in advance. Twenty-one percent operate on a drop-in basis. Intake or registration procedures appear to be very similar in all centers, however, in smaller centers clients are more apt to be

interviewed by a counselor, to be made aware of other options such as the diploma program, and to be given a GED pretest. Most centers require that the applicant fill out several forms, including one for "verification of eligibility." Some centers give out appointment slips. Some send postcards as reminders. Others maintain a file of interested persons, then send letters when the next testing date is sent. Some centers use data forms especially designed to collect the information needed for the annual statistical report.

As to identification accepted, in addition to a driver's license or photo identification, centers will accept:

- Studio photo plus a birth certificate
- Signature check against social security or credit card
- High school transcript with photo attached

In smaller centers identification is not as much a problem as it is in larger centers. Sometimes a counselor or parent can verify identity. However, most centers will refuse to give the test if identity cannot be verified to the satisfaction of the Examiner.

How much do centers charge? The average seems to be $10 or $15 for the total battery. Some charge as much as $20 or as little as $5; still others do not charge anything. For individual tests, centers usually charge $2 to $4. Most charge the same fee for retesting, although some do not charge anything (at least not for the first retest). Sixty percent of testing centers will accept personal checks in addition to money orders. Eighty percent will accept cash.

Test Administration

Most centers give the tests to a client either in numerical order or according to the client's choice. Other centers test as follows:

- One, four, or five in one day; two or three in another
- According to what the pretest or recommending agency suggests
- Math either first or last

The majority of centers, particularly small centers, start clients all at the same time. However, more than 30 percent allow clients to begin at different times. The tests are monitored through individual monitoring or time clocks. Some centers schedule clients hourly so as to make the task more manageable.

Forty-two percent of California's centers stock the Spanish form, while 3 percent stock the French form. About 5 percent stock the audiocassette tapes, 4 percent the large print, and 0.5 percent braille.

Client Recruitment and Counseling

Most of the clientele in California comes from the local adult program or the community at large. Military and job corps programs were also cited as

fairly significant sources. Outreach activities varied. About 6 percent of the centers surveyed, mostly small centers, said that they had no such activities, but about 55 percent said that they have a brochure. This was the most prevalent means cited by large centers. About 48 percent advertise in the local newspaper. Other activities cited were monthly newsletter to parents in the district; large bulletin board; meeting with counselors; through own students in the adult program; notices posted at strategic places around town; flyers and information sheets; radio release; communication with various agencies such as EDD, CETA, Department of Rehabilitation, probation officers, librarians, community-based organizations; speaking engagements at civic club meetings; and so on.

Most GED applicants are given some sort of formal or informal counseling services. Obviously, the counseling is more individual in smaller centers than it is in larger centers. Sometimes the counseling occurs right before the client takes the GED. Some programs counsel only high school diploma students or those who have taken the GED and failed.

The counseling may be done by any one of a variety of persons--counselor, vocational counselor, instructor, principal, test technician, outreach coordinator, or secretary.

If a counseling session is held before a client has registered for the test, often the counselor will ask about prior school experiences and develop with the client some long- and short-range goals. The counselor will also review procedures for earning a high school diploma and determine if the client is ready to take the GED Test. Often a pretest will be administered. If the client scores low, he or she will be sent to a GED preparation class or basic subject classes.

If he or she does well on the pretest, he or she is immediately scheduled for testing. The test is explained to him or her. The cost, reasons, and requirements for taking the test are also discussed. The counselor explains the role that a positive attitude plays in making a good score on the test. The client is told how the results may be used. He or she is also given pointers on which and how many tests to take the first day and on general test-taking techniques. The answer sheet also is explained so as to avoid confusion.

If the client passes, the scores are explained in person, by letter, or by telephone. He or she is told how to apply for a certificate, and special care is taken to instill in him or her a sense of accomplishment. If he or she does not pass, he or she is told where to take a preparation class or what books can be used to study.

Most centers agreed that students have the greatest difficulty with the math test, followed by the writing. Least problems appear to be with reading and social studies.

It was interesting to note that the majority of centers have a fairly stringent retest policy: six months or proof of remedial study. At some centers the client may retake the GED in a couple of weeks if he or she is only a few points from passing. At a few centers, the client may retake immediately but must take a preparation class before retaking the second time. Other stipulations cited by centers:

- Remedial courses must be taken at agencies approved by center.
- Clients involved in the adult program may retake in four months. The rest must wait six.
- Client must bring in a homework assignment as proof of remedial study.
- Client is allowed to retest when the practice test so indicates and not before.
- Retesting is provided for a couple of times a year.

For persons failing the GED, many centers try to advise the persons about enrolling in a local Adult Basic Education Program and perhaps pursuing a high school diploma. Some smaller centers will lend them self-study materials, but recognize that little is gained without at least a tutor.

Trends

Trends cited by centers were varied; some appeared almost contradictory. It is evident that while certain trends are taking place in some areas of the state, the opposite of those trends is occurring in other areas. However, everyone seems to note an increase in demand. Among other trends cited frequently:

- "Older 20-40 re-entry clientele. They do better than younger people."
- "Younger clientele, especially 17-year-olds."
- "Impatient--everyone in a hurry"
- "Agencies working together to serve the GED clientele"
- "Foreigners"
- "Clients less prepared, especially for math"
- "People being <u>better</u> prepared"
- "Clients continuing on for a diploma, vocational training, community college"
- "Using GED as a springboard to a diploma"
- "Demand for the certificate, especially among employers"
- "Clients who have finished 11th grade rather than 10th"
- "Lower reading abilities"
- "Respect for the GED"
- "Lots of motivation"

Operational Problems and Resolutions

The following are representative of day-to-day problems and resolutions:

- Clients writing in test booklets.

  Solution: Instruct examinees to write test booklet number on answer sheet and then sign it. Signature means that they have reviewed the test booklet and can attest to the fact that they found no marks in the booklet.

- Lots of office assistance (for recordkeeping, and so on) required when administering the GED.

  Solution: Switch some of the tests from morning to afternoon when other things are not so pressing.

- Disparity in time required by examinees when they all start at the same time. Some finish first, others take a lot longer.

  Solution: Tightened up test schedule by recognizing that, given that most people finish plenty early, the time left over at the end of the allotted time period is adequate for the break. (Thus, those finishing first have the longest break.)

Other problems cited by centers surveyed:

- Insufficient clientele to make program self-supporting. Yearly purchase of tests expensive.
- Creating an appropriate testing environment when facilities are limited.
- Clients writing graffiti on table tops.
- Appointees not showing up or else showing up late.
- Required set-up of Chief Administrative Officer, Chief Examiner, and Alternate does not coincide with district organization such as accounting, billing, and so forth.
- Keeping good and accurate records.
- Foreign students expecting to use dictionaries, based on the argument that Spanish speakers may take the test in their own language.
- Advising students about which part they should retest in, particularly when from another center. Sometimes difficult to obtain scores, and frustrating if student has received remediation at another center but has not improved.
- Making students take care to not stop before they reach the real end of the exam.

- Counseling as to the difference between the GED and proficiency, and as to who will accept GED scores.

(Do you have a solution to any of the above? If so, drop us a note, and we will pass the information on to centers.)

Appendix C

Adult Education Information Bulletin 81-1

(March 4, 1981)

Recent inquiries about the use of the GED to satisfy requirements set forth in Hart AB 3408/AB 65 (Proficiency Law) have prompted this Information Bulletin.

Background

Assembly Bill 3369, which became law in 1980, clarified the requirement that proficiency assessment be implemented in Adult Education programs. Previously, the Education Code had not specified Adult Education, leaving some question in the minds of adult educators as to the applicability of assessment to their students. AB 3369, however, added Section 51217.5 to the Education Code, thus unmistakably requiring adult schools, evening high schools, and any other program or class for adults to meet the general provisions of the Pupil Proficiency Law.

These proficiency requirements had to be met by adult education students completing high school requirements for graduation after June 1, 1981. (Students graduating on or before this date did not have to meet this requirement.) As such, some districts were involved in last-minute efforts to plan and implement their assessment programs.

Obviously, some procedural components of the Pupil Proficiency Law do not necessarily apply to adult schools. Since such students are involved in a curriculum that is not structured by traditional grade level designations, requirements for conducting assessments at prescribed grade levels do not apply. Likewise, notifying a parent or guardian of a "remediation" conference does not apply, either.

GED and the K-12 Program

The GED Test would be an inappropriate assessment instrument for persons wishing to graduate from high school. Not least among the reasons is the policy of GED/American Council on Education (sole owner and regulator of the test) that the GED Test not, under any circumstances, be administered to persons enrolled in a secondary school. This, of course, includes students who might be concurrently enrolled in adult schools, but who nevertheless would be subject to proficiency requirements on a high school (as opposed to "adult") status. Age, too (eighteen minimum with few exceptions), would prohibit most high school students from being eligible to take the GED, anyway.

The "Adult" Program

When we talk about the adult program, however, the issue grows more complex. From the state's point of view, nothing in California's statutes

prohibits the use of the GED by districts in assessing adult school students on locally-adopted standards of proficiency in reading comprehension, writing, and computation.

What the law says is that:

> 51215 (10g.) Standards of proficiency shall be adopted by the governing board with the active involvement of parents broadly reflective of the socioeconomic composition of the district, administrators, teachers, counselors, and, with respect to standards in secondary schools, pupils.
>
> 51216 (b.) Proficiency assessments shall be used to determine whether pupils need additional assistance in basic skills, and if so, the appropriate content and mode of any such assistance.
>
> It is the intent of the Legislature that pupil assessments measure the progress of each pupil in mastering basic skills rather than the pupil's performance relative to his or her classmates.

However, there are many other factors beyond state law to consider.

Factors to Consider

Whatever instrument a district chooses to measure the progress of each student in mastering basic skills, as well as proficiency attainment, it should meet traditional APA-NCME-AERA (or other similar) standards for test quality. In addition, the instrument must measure the student against district-adopted standards which are based on local curriculum and instructional practices. Thus, the instrument by nature must closely match the curriculum objectives and be congruent with the actual subject matter being taught to students in the adult program.

The GED Test would most likely not fill this purpose because, as a nationally and internationally-given test, only in rare circumstances would it measure the content of the local curriculum--in the way that curriculum is taught in a particular district.

Furthermore, the proficiency law describes a criterion-referenced assessment. (The GED Test is a norm-referenced test.) Once a passing score or "cut-off point") is adopted, the meeting and exceeding of that standard must represent at least the attainment of specified proficiencies (and provide information on the content and mode of assistance any given student would need), rather than referring only to a norming population. Since all these conditions must be met by the assessment instrument a district chooses, the GED Test would have to be subjected to an appropriate screening. In order to do this, a district would have to carefully examine the test to match individual test questions to the district competencies. Items not matching the local curriculum and standards of proficiency would have to be deleted from consideration in determining a student's status in the attainment of basic skill proficiencies. Obviously, security of the GED Test would make it extremely difficult to comply

with these conditions. In addition, any matching of test questions to local curriculum and standards would have to be repeated yearly, since GED/American Council on Education distributes different tests to official centers each year.

Moreover, Education Code Section 51216 (b.) (last paragraph) states, "It is the intent of the Legislature that the governing board of each school district make every effort possible to periodically screen assessment instruments for racial, cultural, and sexual bias." Unfortunately, information on the GED Test regarding the degree of such biases is, at this point, very limited. Again, GED Test security requirements would complicate attempts at the district level to comply with these requirements. GED/American Council on Education policy would prohibit anyone other than an approved examiner at an official testing center to screen, review, or otherwise have access to the test.

Further still, the agency insists on a rigid separation between GED preparation programs (classes) and the testing program. Thus, a district electing to use the GED Test for proficiency assessment--having chosen the test as the "teaching goal" and having "fit" the local curriculum, objectives, and standards to the test--would face an increased burden of ensuring that teaching personnel remained outside of any GED screening processes.

Finally, while state law only mandates proficiency assessments in reading comprehension, writing, and computation, a district choosing the GED Test for adult students would probably want to administer the entire set of five tests, in view of the fact that GED/American Council on Education frowns upon the practice of allowing persons to take less than the whole test battery. This means students being subjected to the writing, science, math, reading, and social studies tests, even though their district may have chosen to set proficiency standards only in the basic skill areas.

Retest policies governing the GED Test should be considered, also, by a district. The most stringent of these is that if a person fails to pass one or more of the individual tests, he or she must complete the entire battery before repeating any one test. Granted, a district that sets its own passing score or "cut-off point" would cloud the issue of "pass" versus "fail" as pertains to GED retesting policies. Nonetheless, districts should be aware of the fact that GED/American Council on Education may or may not at any time have policies which could shape and regulate a district's own assessment program.

Conclusion

In conclusion, adult educators must very seriously consider the hazards (as well as the benefits) of using the GED Test to satisfy proficiency assessment requirements. While state law does not specifically prohibit the practice, GED/American Council on Education policies would tend to discourage it or, at best, make it very difficult. GED personnel will be working with the American Council on Education, as well as others knowledgeable about proficiency mandates, to gain more of an insight on this issue. At that time we will provide all the information we can. In the meantime, any questions should be referred to the county counsel.

Appendix D

Why GED Should Not Be Used to Satisfy Proficiency Requirements

(Reprinted from a letter from the GED Testing Services to the California State Department of Education)

Basic Skills

The California law now requires that school proficiency standards reflect "basic skills" and, further, that these skills include those that are ". . . necessary to success in school and life experiences." The legislative language does not further specify exactly what these basic skills are. It is certain that some of the skills involved in answering correctly certain questions on the GED Tests would be viewed as "basic." Others would be seen as beyond the "basic" level. Similarly, since some of our questions are drawn from the content and skills usually acquired in high schools courses not required of all students it is quite possible for a high school student to graduate lacking some of the corresponding skills; in that sense, at least, some of the GED items reflect skills that are not necessary to "success in school" (i.e., graduation). Finally, some of our test items require skills that are probably not "necessary to success in . . . life experiences" for all persons, though they may be useful for many.

Although success on the GED Tests certainly requires some basic skills in reading comprehension, writing, and computation, additional skills are also tested. Because the scoring of our tests makes no distinction among items (each question answered correctly contributes one point to the examinee's raw score), the resulting standard scores do not reflect the examinee's level of proficiency in the "basic skills" only; the scores also reflect proficiency in other related skills. We do not permit the reporting of scores based only on a district's view of what questions require "basic skills," in part, because the reliability of the resulting scores based on only some of the test questions, would be insufficient to justify a "pass or fail" decision. Too, the scores resulting from varying definitions of "basic skills" would no longer be comparable; a successful examinee's access to higher education, jobs, and military service opportunities would be jeopardized by permitting score reporting variations.

For these reasons, it would be difficult to interpret scores from the current GED Tests as reflecting (only) "basic skills" proficiency levels. Additionally, although low-standard scores on the GED Tests probably indicate a need for additional assistance in many basic skills, they do not provide much useful information about "the appropriate content and mode of any such assistance" as required by AB 3369.

Norm-referenced Scores

Although this term is not used in the law, it is stated that "it is the intent of the Legislature that pupils' assessments measure the progress of each pupil in mastering basic skills rather than the pupil's performance relative to

his or her classmates." Technically, since the GED standard scores and percentiles are based on the test results of a national sample of high school seniors, a narrow reading of the law would permit their interpretation as proficiency standards.

It is noted, however, that the Technical Assistance Guide extends the language to add "This means that pupil progress must be measured individually against an absolute standard of basic skills mastery rather than as a part of a group compared against national, state, district, school or 'grade' norms." Examinee scores on the GED Tests are always reported individually, but always on a basis that compares the examinee's level of achievement to that of a national norm group of high school seniors. In practice, to earn a GED standard score of 35 on one of the tests requires that the examinee answer correctly more questions than did 7 percent of the high school norm group. To earn a standard score average of 45 on the battery, examinee performance must surpass that of 28 percent of the high school norm group. Since California requires both a minimum of 35 on each test and an average of 45 on the five tests, the current requirements make it necessary for an examinee to earn higher scores than 31 percent of the high school norm group. On a particular test, (e.g., Writing Skills), an examinee who improves his or her standard score from 35 to 40 as a result of additional study can only be said to have progressed from a general level of achievement surpassing 7 percent of the high school seniors to a level surpassing 16 percent of the seniors. Because of the nature of our tests, this gain may have resulted without any improvement in a specific skill (e.g., spelling) or may have resulted entirely from such an improvement. In general, standard scores and percentiles like those used on the GED Tests are useful measures of current status and of relative strengths on the tests in the battery, but are not useful as indicators of progress within a particular test or skill area. The usefulness of GED scores for individual diagnosis and remediation is very limited.

Test Bias

AB 3369 notes that "It is the intent of the Legislature that the governing board of each school district make every effort possible to periodically screen assessment instruments for racial, cultural, and sexual bias." We share the concerns implied in this note. During the period in which the current GED Test forms were being developed, these steps were taken to guard against the possibility that such unintended, irrelevant, and unfair sources of influence on examinee test results would occur in the use of the GED Tests:

(1) Item writers were instructed to produce material that

  (a) Avoided sex-role stereotyping

  (b) Contained a broad range of stimulus (reading) material with which persons from a variety of minority groups could identify and would find interesting

(2) Item writers and test development staff were given specific instructions for use in preparing test passages and questions to be certain that racial, cultural and gender-related experiences were properly addressed. These included requiring that:

(a) In the Reading Skills tests, about 20 percent of the questions on each form should reflect the experiences and concerns of minority racial and cultural groups.

(b) Each Reading Skills test form should contain at least one passage written by a woman author or indicating an awareness of the women's movement.

(3) Prior to final assembly, each test form was reviewed for items that, through stereotyping, illustration or content factors, might represent unfairly or might be differentially difficult for women and minority group members.

We are reasonably confident that, to the degree that subjective review of test content can eliminate such possible sources of test bias, this was accomplished for the current GED Tests.

Because the test forms are secured material and because test forms and individual questions are reused periodically, we do not permit local school personnel or adult education teachers to review the current tests. The law, however, encourages such local reviews and this runs counter to our existing procedures. We would not permit each school board to conduct reviews of each current test form. It would, therefore, be impossible for a district to comply with the clearly stated intention of the Legislature.

Orientation of GED Testing Program

The GED testing program is intended to provide individual adults an opportunity to earn a high school equivalency credential. In contrast, most standardized secondary school achievement tests (e.g., California Achievement Tests, Metropolitan and Stanford series, and Iowa Tests of Educational Development) are intended for use in school or district assessment and guidance programs. This difference in program orientation leads to quite divergent policies with respect to the operation of the testing programs. In summary form, these differences can be characterized as:

Program Policy Area	Most Secondary School Achievement Tests	GED Tests
Eligibility for testing	Enrolled in a school that chooses to use the test	Anyone meeting age, residence, and non-enrollment criteria
Review opportunities	Available for teacher review, not for student review	Available for state department review, not for teachers or examinees
Score scales	Usually norm-referenced, some criterion-referenced. Growth or "progress" scales usually available	Norm-referenced only; no "progress" scales developed

Program Policy Area	Most Secondary School Achievement Tests	GED Tests
Level of reporting and analyses	Individual results reported to examinee and school; grade, district, school and classroom summary analyses also available	Individual results reported only to the examinee and his/her designee; no group analyses routinely available
Costs	Paid by the school or district	Paid by the individual examinee

Other Considerations

In general, the policies and procedures of the GED Testing Service are intended to provide a broad framework within which each participating state can design a suitable testing and credentialing program. The California adult high school program represents a unique approach to the continued learning activities of adults. In most states, no formal program of study exists for adults seeking an equivalency credential. The State Department of Education, in permitting the students in adult high school programs to take the GED Tests, took advantage of an existing assessment program to offer a certification route that has grown to have wide acceptance. This legislation, affecting only a few of the GED examinees tested each year in California (those enrolled in the adult high school program), places district officials in a difficult position. Because of the nature of the GED Tests and because of some of our policies and practices, it will be impossible for district officials to defend a decision to identify the GED Tests as "proficiency standards" under this law.

The GED Tests represent a rigorous standard for a credential; about thirty percent of the country's high school graduates could not meet the requirements set by California. Since the tests and testing program are designed for persons who are not enrolled in formal high school completion programs, however, certain policies have been established that make it difficult for the tests to qualify as "proficiency standards" as defined in the current California laws. It does not seem useful, in our view, to make modifications needed to meet the requirements of your law. Specifically, we do not judge it useful, in light of the use in other states and for Californians not enrolled in adult high school programs, to:

(1) Redesign the tests as criterion-referenced tests,

(2) Restrict the test coverage to a specific set of basic education skills, or

(3) Permit local examination of secure test forms by district officials.

I hope that these remarks will assist you in advising district officials concerning this matter. Please see that this letter is distributed to all persons with an interest in the matter.

Sincerely,

/s/

Douglas R. Whitney
Associate Director

Appendix E

GED Preparation Programs

(Based on 1981 survey and reprinted from
Summer, 1981, GED Information Bulletin)

"But what do other schools do?" ask teachers, coordinators, and administrators of GED preparation programs. "Have any information we can use as a guideline for establishing or modifying our own program?" To form a basis for answering these questions, numerous adult school administrators or coordinators were recently polled. As a result of that and of follow-up discussions with other adult educators, the following interpretation is presented for the state of GED preparation programs in California's adult schools.

GED as Part of the Adult Program Structure

The majority of students enrolled in GED preparation programs in California are between the ages of twenty-one and twenty-five (68 percent). (Predictably so, this statistic somewhat reflects the general adult school population, and is further validated by the belief that twenty-one to twenty-five year olds tend to have "come into the age" of placing value on passage of the GED.) The most common reason for enrolling is "seeking better employment" (59 percent), followed by postsecondary (15 percent), and diploma (13 percent) opportunities.

As expected, preparation courses, for the most part, are offered fee-exempt. Over 13 percent of the adult schools offer these classes in Spanish (obviously in areas with a high concentration of Hispanics).

Sixty percent of the adult schools polled offer credit for taking GED preparation courses. Ninety percent offer credit for passing the GED test. How much? The range extends from 25 to 150. The average is 70. Most of these schools award credits in (a) "electives only" categories; (b) across all discipline areas corresponding to the test--science, math, social studies, English; or (c) both "a" and "b" above. Seventy-two percent of the schools do not use scores as a basis for determining the number of credits to be awarded. Some schools waive one or two course requirements, depending on the scores achieved in a certain test. Usually the classes waived are English or math. Rarely is social studies waived, due to the broad coverage of this particular test and the ambiguity in pinpointing what "passing" actually means. (For example, a person could feasibly miss all U.S. history test items, but still pass the social studies test. Therefore, it would obviously not be appropriate to waive a U.S. history requirement.) Other schools simply require that students meet a specified minimum score on each section in order to receive a blanket number of credits. In other words, as far as credit is concerned--it's all or nothing.

Most persons polled said that their students (64 percent) found the math test to be the hardest, with the writing test a far second (23 percent). On the other hand, the reading test was said to be the easiest (48 percent), followed by the social studies (29 percent) and the science (13 percent) tests.

Basic Organization and Teaching Methodologies

The most common pattern of organization of GED preparation classes is one "class" or learning lab with individualized instruction in all subject areas of GED. These labs are open-entry, open exit, and frequently students are placed in them following a diagnostic test of sorts (e.g., GEPI, GED's own practice tests, or another) to establish strengths and needs, and resulting individualized "prescriptions." Based on what the tests reveal, students are assigned areas of study, with emphasis on areas of weakness. The learning lab provides for self-study with programmed tests and teacher assistance. Typically, students continue in the lab until they successfully complete a post-test (usually another GED practice test). If a student fails the GED, he or she resumes lab work on a remedial basis before trying again.

Some adult schools combine the learning lab with a lecture, class discussion, and small group study of a particular subject. Some classes offer one subject at a time beginning with an overview, followed by 12-20 hours of concentrated study in each subject area. Such classes, as well as others covering several subjects in a session, tend to be very structured. Still others are divided into sections, each focusing on a different subject, e.g., Monday--reading, Tuesday--social studies, Wednesday--biology, and so forth. Some maintain a highly individualized, self-study approach, with a certain portion of each class devoted to drawing the class together to teach a basic concept.

Finally, some adult schools advise students to take regular high school courses (Basic Education) rather than GED preparation courses. This usually occurs when a school doesn't offer a GED preparation program, or when diagnostic testing and previous attempts to pass the GED suggest that a student requires longer, more in-depth study in the GED subject areas.

Materials Used

Most GED Test preparation courses make use of a variety of instructional materials. These include commercial texts, most frequently from Cambridge, Monarch, Arco, Steck-Vaughn, McGraw Hill, Amsco, and Houghton-Mifflin, Contemporary. (Many of these are the same texts used in "diploma" or Basic Education courses.) Other materials include consumable workbooks; teacher-made items such as handouts; diagnostic pre, post, and practice tests, including GED's own sample tests "A" and "B"; and audio visual materials.

Teachers of GED Test Preparation Courses: Training and Experience

The overriding similarity among all GED Test preparation teachers is the many years of experience they have had in remedial education at all levels--secondary and adult, in particular. Many are subject matter specialists. Others have a strong general education background. Many of these teachers update their instructional knowledges and skills through participation in local workshops and conferences.

It appears that some GED Test preparation teachers have taken counseling courses, cited as an asset due to the counseling "side" to teaching adults--particularly in times of economic hardships and strained school budgets.

Presumably these teachers are able to function in a counselor capacity at a time when many schools are losing counseling staff.

Follow-up Counseling Activities

Fortunately, counselors are still available in many adult schools to provide services to GED Test preparation students. For the most part, counseling appears to be available upon request rather than as a matter of routine. Some schools offer services on both an individual and a group basis.

When a student takes the GED Test, the counselor may interpret the test results and explain what the student has accomplished and where he or she can go from there. The counselor may also determine the number of credits the students has earned toward a credential, based on success with the GED. The counselor may also give a career interest test and discuss options such as college (e.g., referral to local community college), job development and training programs (e.g., referral to EDD and other agencies), and continuing in the adult diploma program.

If a student fails the GED Test, the counselor is then faced with the challenge of helping the student to ready himself or herself psychologically, as well as academically, to retake the test. This often involves strategies for confidence development. The counselor also explores questions such as: Is there a critical need (time line) for passing the GED Test? How does the availability of preparation classes fit with the student's own schedule? What classes, besides preparation classes, might help in specific remediation? Sometimes the student is referred to ABE classes and then on to GED Test preparation classes again.

Latitude in Decision Making

While the above information--interpreted from a recent poll and follow-up informal conversations with adult school personnel--won't give us a cast-in-stone profile of GED programs in California, it does provide us with a framework or a basis from which to start if we want to examine the question: To what extent are GED Test preparation programs an important part of the adult school (and diploma) program? Moreover, in surfacing a wide range of practices across the state, the information suggests the wide latitude that adult schools have in making decisions about their own programs.

Appendix F

Taking the GED Test

(5-1/2 Questions To Ask Yourself)

Don't worry. You're not the first person ever to ask. It's natural to feel a little shaky. But remember: for the GED, you'll draw upon skills you've picked up along the way in your daily life, such as on the job. That you've been away from school for a long time doesn't really matter. So all you can do is try your very best, and then see where you'll go from there. But to ease your mind, just ask yourself these questions:

1. Have I been reading lately? Reading is the key to at least three of the GED tests: science, reading, and social studies. The questions are multiple choice, based largely on reading passages. You'll be asked to organize sentences, analyze information, and even make some generalizations or judgments. But a lot of it's just plain ol' common sense. You may even be asked questions like, "What is the theme of the above . . ." or "What is the author trying to say . . ." Remember that the GED won't be asking for your opinion, but only the conclusions you arrive at based on the facts presented.

   You'll also need to read the directions very carefully. Even on the math test, you'll have to read word problems with phrases that'll clue you in on if you're to add, multiply, subtract, divide. You'll also have to take care to read the entire question, such as "How many male dogs . . ." so that you don't calculate female dogs.

2. Have I put my study skills to work? Keep a dictionary handy and as you read, look up words you don't know. Notice strange spellings. If your mind tends to wander, try underlining key words and phrases as an aid to concentration. Pick up materials containing graphs or charts, which are just a vivid way of looking at things in relation to other things. There's no mystery to reading charts and graphs, but the more you practice, the more comfortable you'll be. Develop a critical eye, like a detective. Jot down phrases you don't understand or questions you have. Read carefully so that you'll notice things like "supposed to" as opposed to "suppose to" and "all ready" as opposed to "already." Notice irregular verbs. Redo problems you miss. Develop self-discipline. Lengthen your study time a little each day. That way you'll build up your stamina as a jogger does.

3. Have I recently reviewed my math subjects? Even if you're a super reader, you won't be able to wing your way through math if you don't know many math operations. A simple review does wonders--so do it. But relax. Everybody gets little pangs when thinking about the math test. Brush up on the basic calculations--addition, subtraction, X, ÷, %, area, volume, and maybe some algebra and geometry. You'll learn by doing. And remember: you can miss quite a few and still pass.

4. Have I taken any practice tests? Either the ones at the back of a GED book or the Official GED Practice Tests? These tests should be timed. But keep in mind that the time shouldn't bother you too much. The GED people want to know how much you know, not how fast you know it. The test is set to the clock only so that you move along at a regular pace and don't dally for ten minutes on each question. You'll have plenty of time. Studies have shown that most people have more than enough time to complete the real test (and that even if a person was given from sun-up to sundown, he probably wouldn't do any better).

   The value in taking the practice test is that it lets you in on two secrets. One is the format of the GED. You'll find out how questions are asked and answers presented. Sometimes when we meet the unknown, we see that it's not so bad after all. The second is that it lets you know where you stand. You'll learn what you're good in and what you oops! need more practice in. So you can work on your weak areas before taking the real test.

5. Am I confident in my ability to pass or, at least, to put up a good fight? It's natural to feel a little anxious about a test. But remember: life is full of little tests, formal and informal: an interview for a job, an audition for a neighborhood play, an audit interview if the IRS thinks you owe money. In some cities, you can't adopt a homeless little kitten from the SPCA unless you prove that you'll be a good mother or father. No matter how old or famous we become, we still must face tests. Nobody likes a test. We don't like tests because we fear rejection. But as we develop confidence in ourselves and in our ability, we realize the importance of taking a risk.

5-1/2. Finally, ask yourself, what do I have to lose? At most, you only stand to lose the minimal cost of the test and a little time. This is far outweighed by the gains you stand to make: experience in taking the actual test and familiarity with how the questions are asked. If your answers to questions one to five above are "yes," then you've a good chance of passing. If, however, you don't pass, after further study, you'll be able to retake any one of the five tests. You've obviously set some goals and priorities for yourself, or else you wouldn't be trying for your GED. And recognizing the value of goals puts you a step ahead of other people. You're bound to be a winner.

Publications Available from the Department of Education

This publication is one of approximately 500 that are available from the California State Department of Education. Some of the more recent publications or those most widely used are the following:

Administration of the School District Budget (1983)	$3.00
American Indian Education Handbook (1982)	3.50
Apprenticeship and the Blue Collar System: Putting Women on the Right Track (1982)	10.00
Arts for the Gifted and Talented, Grades 1—6 (1981)	2.75
Arts for the Handicapped Trainer's Manual (1982)	6.50
Bilingual-Crosscultural Teacher Aides: A Resource Guide (1984)	3.50
California Private School Directory	9.00
California Public School Directory	12.50
Career/Vocational Assessment of Secondary Students with Exceptional Needs (1983)	4.00
Child Development Program Guidelines (1983)	3.75
College Core Curriculum: University and College Opportunities Program Guide (1983)	2.25
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